

# Darklands™



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# Darklands™



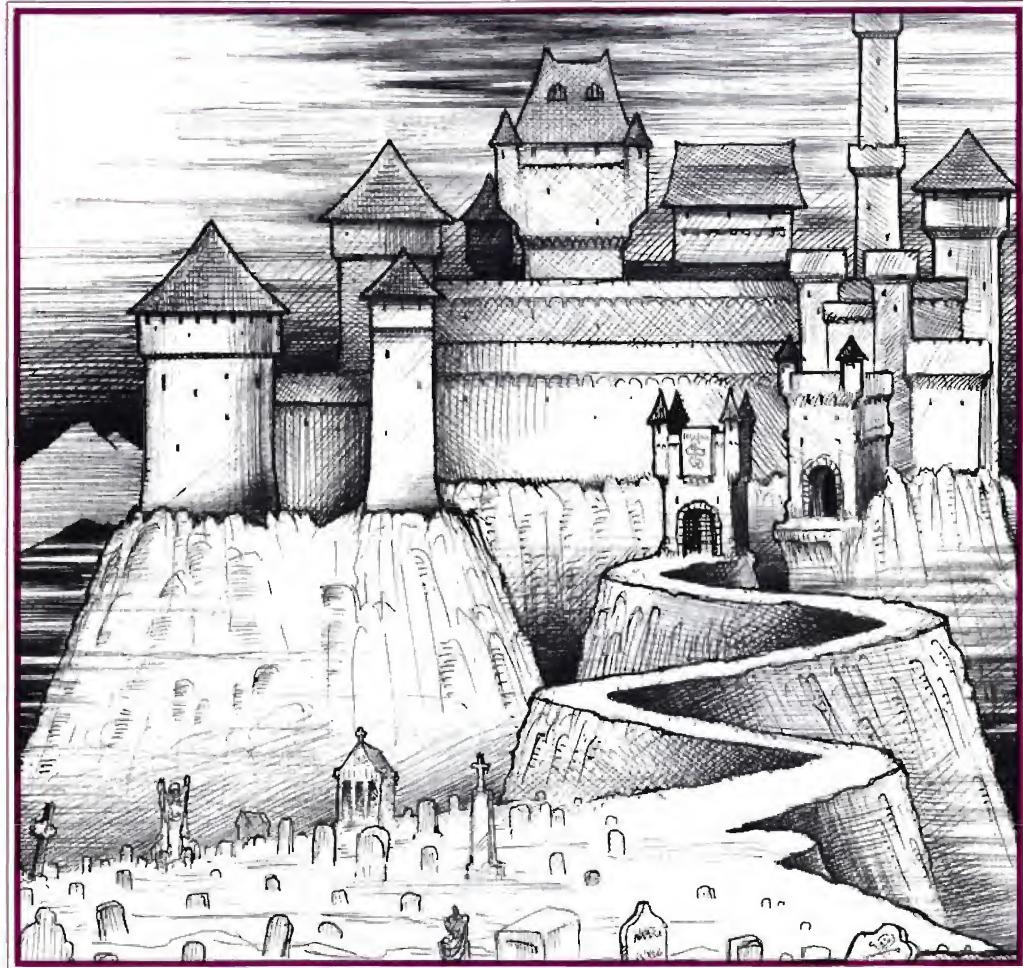
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# ntroduction

Welcome to *Darklands*, a fantastic land where knights in plate armor rule from soaring, turreted castles; where an ordinary journey becomes a dangerous adventure; and where clerics can command miraculous powers while wizardly alchemists concoct awesome potions.

This realm is chaotic and violent. The roads and rivers are unsafe. Justice is uncertain. Bribery and corruption are commonplace. People's darkest fears are real: awful dragons ravage the countryside, strange creatures infest underground mines, loathsome witches dispense crippling curses, and satanic cults seek to ensnare the unwary.

*Darklands* is based on a real time and place: Greater Germany in the 15th Century. The strange, miraculous and magical elements simply reflect popular beliefs, superstitions and myths. This is an era before logic or science, a time when anything is possible. In short, if medieval Germans believed something might be true, in *Darklands* it may actually *be* true.

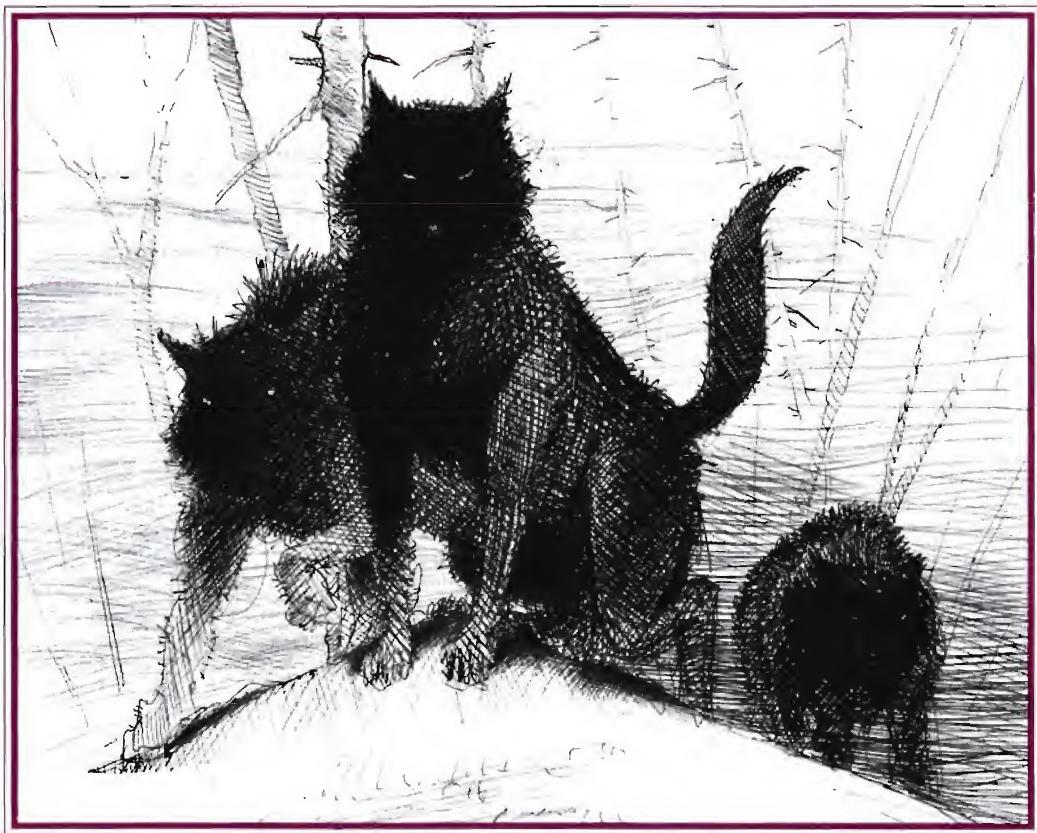
*Darklands* is a fantasy role-playing game. You direct a band of heroes (your "party") in search of immortal fame. You can actually create the type of heroes you desire, using the character generation system, or you can use pre-generated characters.

You travel across the Holy Roman Empire, as the realm was then called. The Emperor is weak, while the Princes constantly war among themselves. You can visit more than 90 different cities, as well as innumerable castles, hamlets and monasteries. You will find unique dangers and surprising terrors. There are many opportunities to perform heroic

deeds—actions that people will remember long after you pass. Someday your fame might rival that of Beowulf, Roland, and other great medieval heroes whose stories are still remembered today.

We invite you to enter the *Darklands*, a place where reality is fantasy, and fantasy reality. Begin now a lifetime of quests and adventures...







# Quickstart Tutorial

This is a fast, casual overview of *Darklands*. It is designed to get you playing quickly. For specific questions, details and special options, or step-by-step instructions, refer to the appropriate section in “Playing Darklands.” On the back cover of this booklet is a quick summary of all keyboard commands. You may find it handy, especially if you lack a mouse.

## ❖ Keyboard and Mouse ❖

**MOUSE:** *Darklands* can be operated with mouse and/or keyboard. With the mouse, you “left-click” (click the left button) to select items, or occasionally “left-down” (hold down the left button) to “drag” items from one spot to another on the screen.

Most selectable options highlight as you move over them. Scrolling lists of items have a “scroll bar” at the top and bottom. Left-clicking on this bar moves the highlight up or down.

The right button activates the hidden menu bar. Right-down reveals the menu bar and allows you to select menu items. To choose options, move the mouse (with the button still down) to the item desired, then release the button.

**KEYBOARD:** All mouse selections have keyboard equivalents. This allows you to mix and match mouse and/or keyboard commands in whatever way you feel is most efficient. In general, the design concept is a simplification of that used in MicroSoft Windows® and the Apple Macintosh.

Some options have a highlight, movable by cursor keys; tap the Return key to make your selection. Other options have a crimson letter (the first capital letter, if you’re color-blind). Tap that character (on the keyboard) for that action. Complex situations include both: move the highlight first, then tap the appropriate crimson letter. In a few cases the

options may not be on the screen (especially in Character Information); here you must refer to the back manual cover for appropriate “action” keys.

The cursor keys include not just the traditional arrow keys, but also the numeric keypad. This means that 1, 3, 7 and 9 can be used for diagonal movement on the map or in battle.

To use the menu bar, tap F10, move the highlight with the cursor keys, then tap Return to make your selection. To leave the menu bar without making a selection, tap F10 again. Note that most menu bar actions include the names of a keyboard shortcut.

## ❖ Installation, Setup and Loading ❖

See the accompanying “Installation & Supplement” booklet for details on installing, configuring (setup) and loading the game.

After you load, when the animated opening ends, select the “Quickstart” option. This bypasses the character generation sequence (if you’re interested in that, see “Creating Characters,” pp13, for details).

## ❖ Party and Goals ❖

Your goal is fame. The more you get, the longer you’ll be remembered. Accomplishing great tasks, righting wrongs, or just participating in significant activities can improve your fame.

To see your current fame, money, and other information, tap F6 for party information.

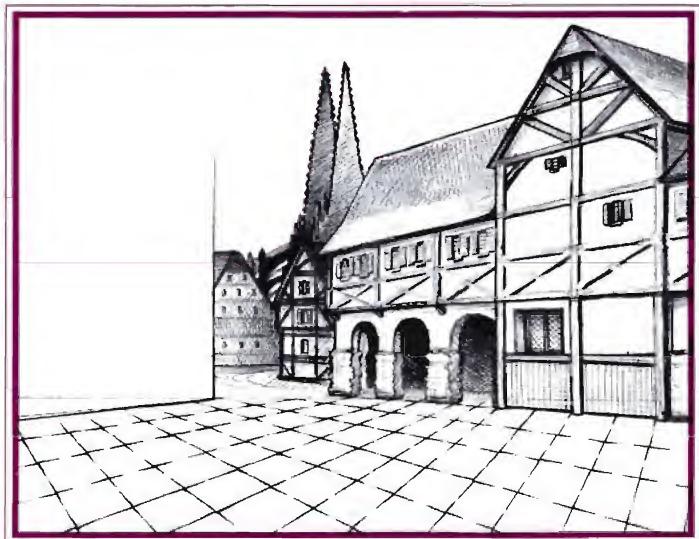
## ❖ Character Information ❖

You may be curious about the characters in your party. To see information about a character, left-click on the appropriate

character box (along the left side of the screen) or tap F1 through F5. Incidentally, these character boxes have bar graphs showing the character's current endurance, strength and DF (divine favor), with the numeric value beneath. In *Darklands* these three values fluctuate the most, hence their constant visibility.

This screen presents full information about a character. You can left-click on a board (or move the highlight box and tap Return) for more information. Equipment, Formulae, and Saints open up scrolling lists.

To use a specific weapon or wear specific armor, highlight the item and tap "a." To use a specific potion, tap "p." To try to use a relic's special powers, tap "r." To discard an item forever (i.e., just get rid of it), tap "d." To transfer an item to another character, tap "1" through "5" to indicate the character. If using a mouse, you can left-drag an item to another character box, or onto the armament board (which lists current weapons and armor). You must still use the keyboard for discards.



The formulae list is for reference. Selecting a formula gives you information, nothing more.

The saint list not only describes what a saint can do, but also allows you to pray for miraculous aid at that instant. Of course, the character's divine favor (DF) will be reduced. Fortunately, elsewhere in *Darklands* you can regain this.

To exit character information, left-click or press the function key that matches the highlighted character box (the small box on the left side of the screen).

**PARTY LEADERSHIP:** Any of your characters can be the party leader and spokesperson. You can assign a new leader by going to their Character Information and left-clicking on "Not Leader." However, a faster way is simply to hold down the Control (ctrl) key and tap a function key, from F1 to F5.

## From Recreation to Travel

**AT THE INN:** When you leave character information, you're back at the initial gathering of your party, planning your adventure. The options available here are typical of many interactions throughout the game. Select "...spend some time here..." to stay at the local inn.

Incidentally, on screens with these menu options, you can get hints and help by holding down the shift key while you move the highlight over the options. The amount of help depends on the difficulty level selected.

At the inn, select the "...take up residence..." (staying here) option. It allows you to select different daily activities for each of your characters, including prayer (to regain divine favor), regaining strength (to recover from wounds), study and training (if you've found any teachers), earning money (useful if there's nothing better happening), and alchemy work. To operate this screen, move the highlight to a character name, then left-click or tap the crimson letter to select his or her activity. When you're finished, pick one of the two options at the bottom ("Spend a day..." or "Leave").

The "Alchemy work" option allows a character to create specific potions. First you select a formula. Next you see your chances of success and the ingredients required. If you have sufficient ingredients and skill, you can make one or more

potions of that type. All this is just planning — the actual work only occurs after you return to the original staying here options and select “Spend a day...”

**TRAVEL:** To leave the city, go from the inn to the main street, and from there go to a main gate and just walk out. You now see yourself on the travel map. To travel, either use cursor keys or left-click on a destination.

## Battle

Just to learn more, let’s provoke a fight. The easiest way is to return to the city you just left, go up to the main gate during daylight, and attack the guards there.

Battles have two states: an “orders pause” and “real-time action.” During the orders pause you can give orders to each character in your party. During real-time action, you watch the battle occur. You can stop the action for more orders as frequently as you wish.

Battle starts in “orders pause,” waiting for you to give orders to characters. In fact, the party leader is already selected, as a reminder that you are in orders pause.

To start up the battle and simply watch the action, tap the Space bar.

**ORDERS:** In general, to issue orders, you (1) select a character, (2) select an order, and sometimes (3) select a target or destination.

To select a character, either left-click on one of your characters, or tap a number key from “1” to “5” (use the number keys across the top of the keyboard, *not* the numeric keypad). This immediately puts the battle into “orders pause.”

You can also tap the Space bar to create an orders pause, then select a character (or simply give orders to the party leader, who is automatically selected in this case).

To select an order, use the pull-down “Orders” or “Attack” menus. The most useful options are “Move toward,” “Attack,” “Use Missile” (if the character has a missile weapon) and “Throw Potion” (if the character carries potions). If ordered to attack, a character will move toward the enemy until within weapon range, then start attacking.

Finally, to select a target or destination, hold down the left mouse button. The mouse pointer changes shape. When you release the button, the point of release becomes the new target or destination. When using the keyboard, use the cursor keys to move the target symbol, then tap Return.

Once orders to a character are finished, you can give orders to another character, or start real-time action.

Feel free to select various orders. For a quick battle, give each character orders to attack a different guardsman.

### REAL-TIME ACTION:

To start real-time action, tap the Space bar.

**COMBAT:** When a character targets an enemy, the character box bar graphs double up, showing endurance, strength and DF for both the character (on the left) and the opponent (on the right).

When a character scores a hit on the enemy, the amount of endurance damage appears in red atop the target. When the enemy hits one of your characters, the endurance damage appears in white over the character’s head. You’ll also see the bar graphs change appropriately.

**RESULTS:** When endurance reaches zero, the character collapses. When strength reaches zero, the character is dead. Most characters and enemies collapse before they die, but it is possible for both to happen simultaneously, or for an especially weak character to die quickly.

**LOOTING:** If you are victorious, you can pick over the bodies of the fallen. When this occurs, you see the “Item Exchange Scrolls.” When using the keyboard, the right/left cursor keys shift between the scrolls; with the mouse an



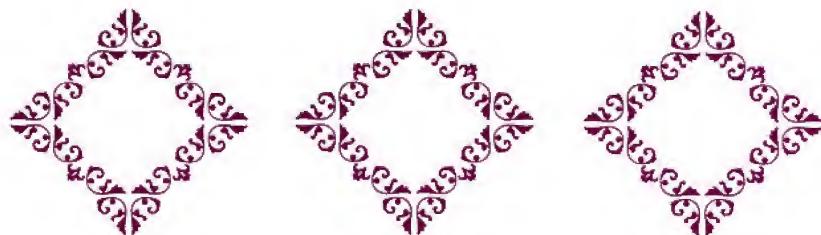


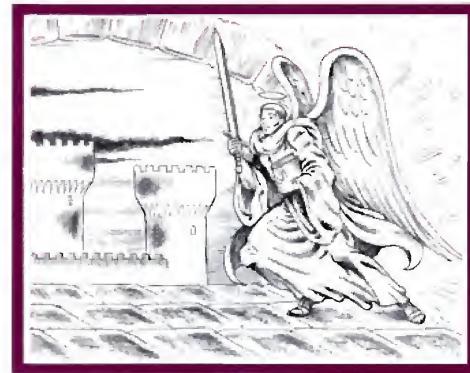
appropriate left-click does the job. One of the actions across the top changes which character's items are shown alongside the available loot. Another moves items between the scrolls.

Actually, this type of screen is used many places, including most business transactions. For detailed instructions about using "Item Exchange Scrolls," see page 28.

## What Next?

Well, now that you've thoroughly infuriated the government at this city by trying to turn guardsmen into dogmeat, it might be wise to travel elsewhere, or at least stick to the side streets! *Darklands* gives you all of Greater Germany to explore, with a wide variety of potential tasks, encounters and rewards. Although there are large plots afoot, as in real life, do not expect everything to be interrelated. Let "medieval common sense" be your guide. Don't be afraid to be altruistic, but don't let down your guard either!





# Playing *Darklands*

## INITIAL OPTIONS

Use the mouse or tap the appropriate letter key to select one of the four options described below.

### Quickstart (“q” key)

This immediately begins your adventures in *Darklands* with four default characters: GRETCHEN, GUNTHER, HANS, and EBHARD. With these adventurers you can begin *Darklands* without spending the time to create new characters.

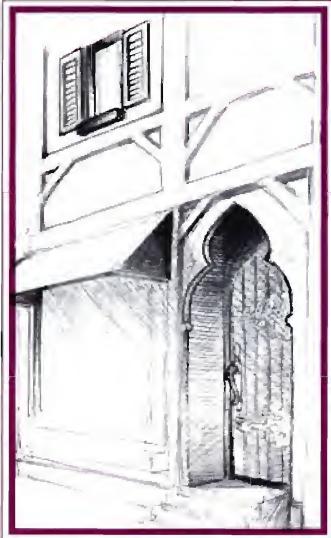
“Gretch” and her friends are a typical, balanced group of adventurers. They have no special abilities or possessions that make them a recommended choice, nor do they have any special weaknesses or disadvantages.

Although the party is always the same in the “Quickstart,” random elements in *Darklands* are reset each time. Therefore, secret locations and upcoming events will be different each time you select this option.

### Create a New World (“c” key)

This also begins *Darklands*, but there is no default party of characters. Instead, you can create your own, new characters to form the party of your choice. As in the “Quickstart,” each time this option is chosen the *Darklands* world is reorganized and reset. Characters created for other worlds are *not* available in this new world. This allows you to have completely different games (each in its own “world”) running simultaneously, without one game “poaching” on another.

Many of the options can be used on any available character (listed to the right on the screen). Therefore, first select a character by left-clicking the mouse on a name, or by tapping the cursor (“arrow”) keys to move the highlight. Then select an action by left-clicking on the word with the crimson letter, or tapping that crimson letter on the keyboard.



#### **CREATE A CHARACTER:**

Here you can create a new character, regardless of which characters (if any) are currently in your party. See “Creating Characters” for more about this.

#### **EXAMINE A CHARACTER:**

Here you can see information about the highlighted character. See “Character Information,” pp22, for details.

#### **ADD TO THE PARTY:**

This adds the highlighted character to the party, and marks the name on the list. Note that your party can have one to four characters, no more.

In some battle situations, party leadership defaults to

the first character added to the party. Bear this in mind when selecting the first character to join the party. For more information, see pp31.

**DELETE FROM THE PARTY:** This removes the highlighted character from the party. The character is still “alive,” available for use in the future.

**SELECT CHARACTER IMAGE:** Here you select new images and colors for the highlighted character. You can change the entire image, or certain colors within the image. Select “Finished” when you are done.

You can only select images for characters in the party. Therefore, add the character to the party before you try to select an image!

**KILL A CHARACTER:** This eliminates the highlighted character from the list of possible characters in the game. If the character is in the party, it also eliminates the character from the party.

**BEGIN THE ADVENTURE:** This ends party selection activities and begins the game. *Make sure you are happy with your party before choosing this option.* This actually creates the new “world,” with random elements reset, secret locations selected, etc. To begin, the party is placed in a city somewhere in Greater Germany, known then as the Holy Roman Empire.

**Important:** To save the characters you have created, you must “Add to the Party” one or more characters, then save the game.

**RETURN TO MAIN MENU:** This menu returns you to the initial options.

### **❖ The Story Continues (“t” key) ❖**

This allows you to manage previously saved games.

**LOAD SAVED GAME:** Use the mouse or cursor keys to select a previously saved game and load it.

**DELETE SAVED GAME:** Use the mouse or cursor keys to delete any previously saved game. *Warning:* deletions cannot be “undone.” Make sure you have no further use for that saved game before selecting this option.

**RETURN TO MAIN MENU:** This menu returns you to the initial options.

### **❖ Heroes of Darklands (“h” key) ❖**

This allows you to view the “Hall of Fame,” where the exploits of the most famous *Darklands* heroes are recorded. You can either erase the existing names in the Hall of Fame, or simply leave, returning to the initial options.



# CREATING CHARACTERS

*Darklands* allows you to create your own characters. You can raise each character from infancy. You can “live” 20 to 65 years of “normal” life for that character, acquiring various attributes and skills. At any time during this period you can end character creation and make the character an adventurer, ready to join your party.

Character creation has many sophisticated options. Beginners are urged to use the default “Quickstart” characters in their first game, or at least skip forward and read the “Character Information” section (pp22), which explains the various attribute and skill categories.

## Initial Options

The recommended procedure is to select your gender, generate a name randomly, and then adjust it and/or the nickname with manual entries. Then begin childhood.

**MAKE HIM/HER A WOMAN/MAN:** This toggles the character’s gender between male and female. Notice that gender slightly affects some starting attributes.

**SELECT A NEW NAME:** This option randomly generates a male or female name, as appropriate, from a list of actual personal and family names used in this era. Nicknames are generated automatically. Both appear on the metal information strip at the top.

**ENTER A NEW NAME:** This option allows you to type a full name for your character. Tap the Return key when done. The nickname is entered separately (see below). The new full name appears across the top.

**CREATE A NEW NICKNAME:** This option allows you to type a short nickname for your character. Tap the Return key when done. The character should also have a full name. The new nickname appears across the top.

**BEGIN CHILDHOOD:** This begins the next step of character creation. Be sure your character has both a name and nickname before selecting this option.

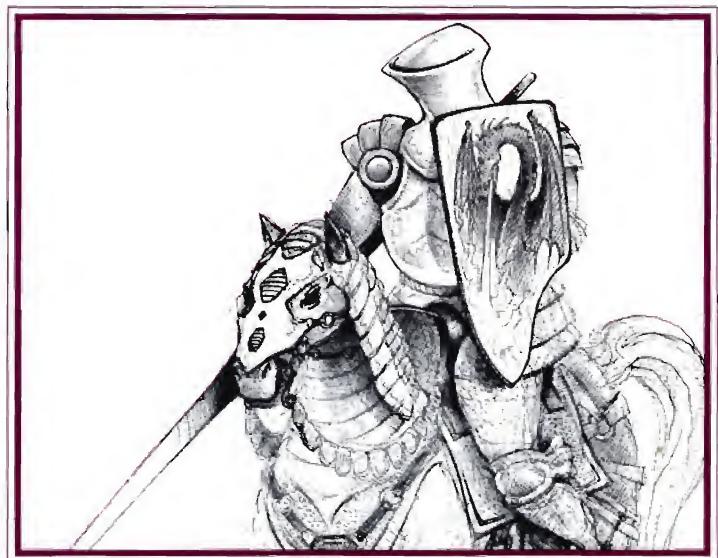
**RETURN TO GAME OPTIONS:** This immediately exits character creation. All entries made on this screen are forgotten.

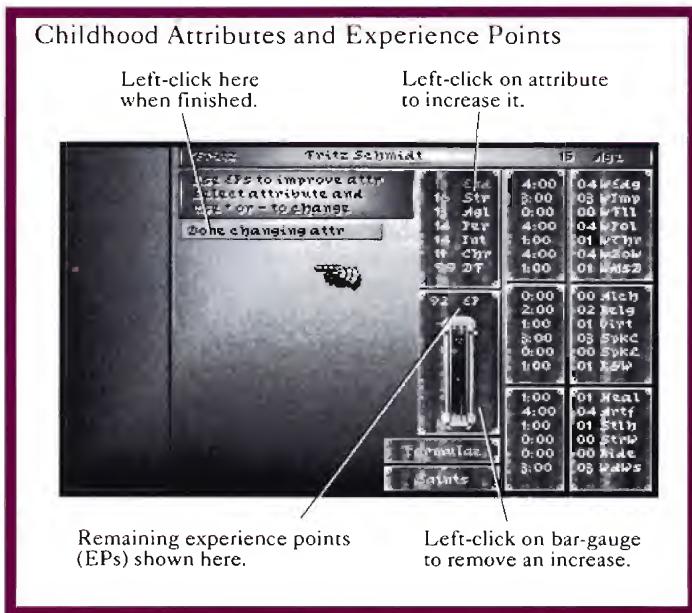
## Family Background

When a character is “born,” you select one of six family backgrounds, ranging from the nobility to a rural commoner (i.e., a peasant). Different backgrounds adjust the character’s initial attributes and skills in minor ways. More importantly, these backgrounds provide a large amount of childhood experience points (EPs), which are used to increase the initial attributes. Finally, family background affects the initial occupations that are available to the character. Each background has certain advantages and disadvantages. There is no “best” or “worst” choice.

As you move the highlight over various options, the character’s attributes, skills, and EPs change, showing the results of each choice.

To choose an option, left-click with the mouse or press the appropriate keyboard letter.





*Note:* after a certain level, attribute increases cost more than one EP per point. Also note that there are absolute limits to human attributes. The normal range for human attributes is 10 to 40, with 25 the average.

**DONE CHANGING ATTR:** When you are finished with all attribute increases, left-click on the “Done” option or tap “d” on the keyboard. This ends childhood and begins life as an adult. Unlike the modern world, in the Middle Ages most people began adult pursuits in their middle teens.

## >Selecting an Occupation

Starting at age 15, every five years a character can select a new occupation. There are over three dozen possible occupations, but only a few are available at any one time.

Initially, family background determines the available occupations. Thereafter, prior occupations and/or attributes are the main determining factors. In some cases a character must follow a specific sequential “chain” of occupations to reach a certain pinnacle of success.

**HIGHLIGHT:** As you move the highlight over various occupations, the skill increases and experience points (EPs) automatically change, showing what is possible in each. Characters get bonus experience during their first two occupations.

**POSSIBLE SKILL INCREASES:** Beside each skill are two numbers. The first number is the amount a skill automatically increases or decreases in that occupation. The second number is the additional increase possible, should you decide to use experience points (EPs) there.

For example, the number “2:04” beside a skill means that occupation automatically increases the skill by two (2) points. In addition, you can spend EPs to increase the skill up to four (4) more points. If you spent the requisite EPs, the total increase would be six.

**SELECTION:** When you left-click the mouse or press Return, you select that occupation for the next five years.



## Childhood Experience (EPs)

This represents the first 15 years of a character’s life. Depending on the family selected, a character has varying amounts of experience points (EPs). This experience is used to increase attributes. Skills *cannot* be modified by childhood experience.

**TO INCREASE AN ATTRIBUTE** with EPs, simply left-click on that attribute. If using the keyboard, use the cursor to highlight the attribute, then tap the “+” key.

**TO UNDO AN ATTRIBUTE INCREASE** with the mouse, left-click on the bar gauge showing the remaining EPs. Each click “undoes” an increase to that attribute. To undo an increase to some other attribute, first left-click on the attribute, then left-click multiple times on the bar-gauge.

If using a keyboard, simply cursor the highlight to the attribute and tap the “-” key.

## Occupation Experience (EPs)

For every five years spent in an occupation, a character improves in certain skills. In addition, the character's experience points (EPs) can be used for a variety of additional skill improvements.

**IMPROVING SKILLS:** To improve a skill by one point, either left-click on the name of that skill, or use the cursor keys to move the highlight to the skill and then tap the "+" key.

Skill improvement is limited by the number of EPs you have available. Normally each skill increase (of one) costs one EP. However, when skills reach a high level, two or more EPs may be required. Each improvement automatically adjusts the remaining EPs.

You cannot increase a skill beyond the amount allowed by the skill increase values. When you add to a skill, the right number is reduced to show the amount of increase remaining.

**REVERSING INCREASES:** To "undo" an increase, either left-click on the EP bar-gauge (as in attributes), or position the highlight with the cursor keys and tap the "-" key.

**GO TO NEXT OCCUPATION:** Only select this when you have finished spending EPs. You do not accumulate unused EPs. Therefore, "spend" them all on skill increases before selecting this option.

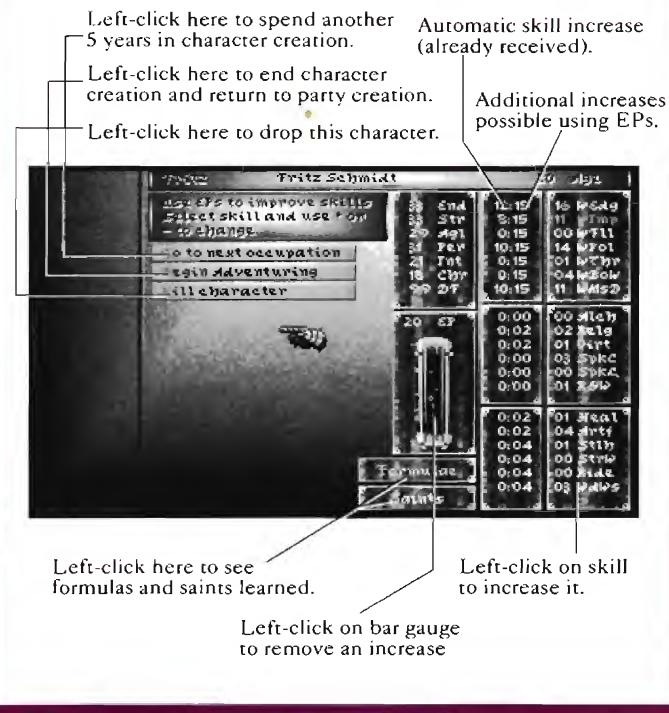
This option returns you to "Selecting an Occupation" where you can choose an occupation for the next five years.

**BEGIN ADVENTURING:** Again, only select this when you have consumed all your EPs.

This option places the character in the "available adventurers" file, for possible inclusion in the party. It then returns you to the various "Create A New World" options.

**KILL THE CHARACTER:** This kills the character, erasing all the work spent on him or her. This is a convenient "delete" for experiments that turn out poorly.

## Occupations and Experience Points



## Accumulated Knowledge & Equipment

As characters live through various occupations, they may acquire alchemical and/or saintly knowledge. You can left-click on the "Formulae" or "Saints" box to view the character's current knowledge. Left-click again to close the scroll of information. If using a keyboard, tap the f or s key to open a scroll of this information; tap the same key again to close it.

Characters also acquire wealth and equipment throughout their life. Equipment is only visible if you examine the





character after creation. Money is included only when the initial members of a party pool their funds at the start of the game. Characters who join the party later do not bring any additional money with them.

### ☞ Saving Your Characters ☚

When you have finished creating the characters you desire (you may create more than four!), you *must* organize an initial party (of one to four characters), select “Begin the Adventure” from the screen options, and then select “Save Game” from the “Game” options on the menu bar (hold down the right mouse button, or tap F10, to see this menu bar). Doing this saves not only the characters of the party, but also any other characters you created for this “world.”



# UNIVERSAL CONTROLS AND MENU BAR

## Mice in *Darklands*

*Darklands* is designed for use with a mouse. It has keyboard equivalents for all operations, for those who lack a mouse or prefer using keys.

When using a mouse with two or more buttons, the standard button is the *left* button for clicking and dragging. If your mouse also has a *right* button, hold down that button to show the menu bar; keep it down to select options from the menus. When you release the right button, the selection occurs and the menu bar disappears.

## Keyboard Cursors in *Darklands*

The arrow (cursor) keys are almost always enabled in *Darklands*. You can use them to move the highlight or target pointer, instead of the mouse.

In addition to the left, right, up and down arrow keys on most keyboards, *Darklands* also supports cursor movement from the numeric keypad. The advantage here is that not only do 2, 4, 6 and 8 correspond to down, left, right and up, but 1, 3, 7 and 9 correspond to the various diagonal directions, which is very useful in movement.

## Character Access/

## Information Controls

In *Darklands* you can examine the "character information" for any character, at any time. See pp22 for a detailed explanation of the character information.

**CHARACTER BOXES:** The left side of the screen shows five boxes. In the top of each is the character's nickname. Below, on the left, is an illustration of the character as he or she appears in battle, and beneath that a single letter indicating the current combat orders or attack, if any.

The remainder of the box has three bar graphs, with numbers beneath. The left bar and number represents the character's current endurance (End). The center bar is the character's current strength (Str). The right bar is the

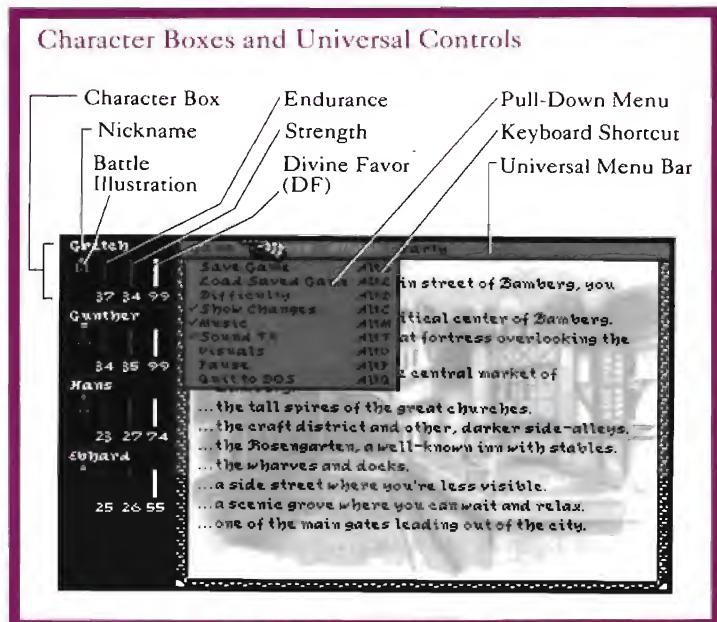
character's current divine favor (DF). The bar graphs show the current value as a percentage of the maximum; the numbers below show the current absolute value.

If potions or saintly miracles raise a character's current endurance or strength above the normal maximum, a small "+" appears above the appropriate bar graph.

The party leader is denoted by special colored text in the character box.

**MOUSE:** To see information about a character, left-click anywhere within the character's box. To leave the information and return to play, left-click again in the box.

**KEYBOARD:** Function keys F1 through F5 select one of the five possible characters in your party. Tap the key once for information. F1 selects the topmost character, F2 the



next character down, etc. F5 selects the character at the bottom. To leave character information and return to the game, tap the same function key again.

## The Universal Menu Bar

Once you begin *Darklands*, a hidden “Universal Menu Bar” is always available across the top of the screen. To see this menu bar, either hold down the right mouse button or tap F10.

To “pull down” a menu from the various options on this bar, simply move the mouse (with the right button still down) or move the highlight (with the left/right cursor keys). In either case, the appropriate pull-down menu appears under that title.

To select an item from the pull-down menu, move the mouse to that item (with the right button *still* down) and release the right button. With a keyboard, move the highlight with the cursor keys to the desired option and tap the Return key.

**MENU BAR SHORTCUTS:** Some menu options have special key combinations for shortcuts. These are listed after the menu item. A menu bar shortcut is used instead of highlighting the menu option. These shortcuts are also listed on the back of the manual. Standard shortcut abbreviations used on the menu bar include:

*alt*: Hold down the ALT key while tapping the letter.

*spc*: Tap the Space bar.

*Rtn*: Tap the Return key.

*Esc*: Tap the Escape key.

## The “Game” Pull-down Menu

**SAVE GAME (alts):** This allows you to save the current game. You can type a short remark about the game. In addition, for general identification purposes the saved game always appends the date and general location. At some points saving is prohibited. In these situations “Save game” is faded and unavailable.

**LOAD SAVED GAME (alt l):** This allows you to reload a previously saved game. Simply move the highlight to select

the desired game and either left-click or press Return.

**DIFFICULTY:** There are three levels of difficulty, which control many aspects of the game, including the amount of help available. The three levels are shown by a sub-menu, with a checkmark showing which is currently operating.

**Basic** provides the greatest help, but character improvement and fame rewards are somewhat smaller. This is recommended if *Darklands* is your first fantasy role-playing game.

**Standard** provides modest help, with average character improvement and fame rewards. This is recommended if you are familiar with fantasy role-playing games.

**Expert** provides almost no help, but your character improvement and fame rewards are larger than normal. This is recommended if you want greater challenges, or seek the best characters and highest fame, regardless of risk or cost.

See “Help and Difficulty Levels,” below, for a more detailed discussion of these options.

**SHOW CHANGES (alt c):** This turns on and off messages about temporary skill and attribute changes caused by alchemical potions or prayers to saints. By default this is “on,” and all changes appear. However, a few saints can cause so many changes that you may wish to turn it off temporarily.

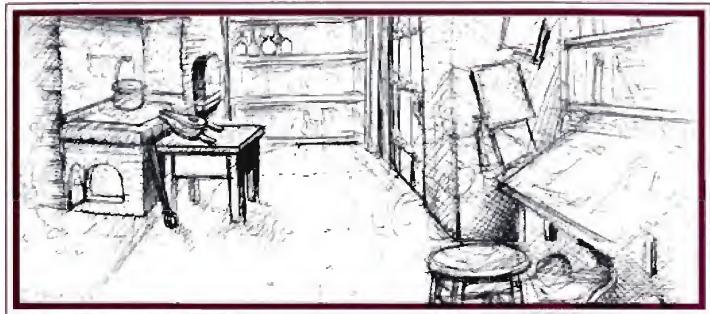
Permanent changes are always shown (such as skill increases caused by experience), regardless of this setting.

**MUSIC:** This option toggles background music on and off. If you see a check mark, then the music is currently on.

**SOUND FX:** This option toggles sound effects on and off. If you see a check mark, then the sound effects are currently on.

**VISUALS:** There are three levels of visual presentation, with the current selection shown by a check mark. This choice affects the way pictures are shown with various menus and messages.





*Full* visuals are the default selection and strongly recommended. It provides the full flavor of the game, and helps you envision medieval reality.

*Quick* visuals instantly fade into the background, without requiring a left-click or return. This option is provided as a convenience for impatient “high-speed” players.

*None* means that the pictures are suppressed. This option is intended for extremely slow computers or hard disks. Suppressing the pictures significantly increases game speed, but also damages the game’s appeal and “flavor.”

**PAUSE** (alt p): This instantly pauses the game, stopping any and all action. This is only useful in battle. Tap any key to resume.

**QUIT** (alt q): This option exits *Darklands*, and returns you to the operating system. The game is *not* saved. Be sure to select “Save game” before you quit.

## ☞The “Orders” Pull-down Menu☞

This menu is only used in battle, to give orders to individuals or the party as a whole. See “Battle” for more information.

## ☞The “Attack” Pull-down Menu☞

This menu is only used in battle, to tell specific characters about which fighting tactic they should use. See “Battle” for more information.

## ☞The “Party” Pull-down Menu☞

**PARTY INFO** (F6): This shows you general information about the entire party. Tap any key or left-click the mouse to leave. See “Party Information,” pp20, for additional details.

**SET AMBUSH** (F7): This option sets or removes an ambush. When an ambush is set, your party will wait in ambush for an enemy. See “Travel and Interaction,” pp27, for details.

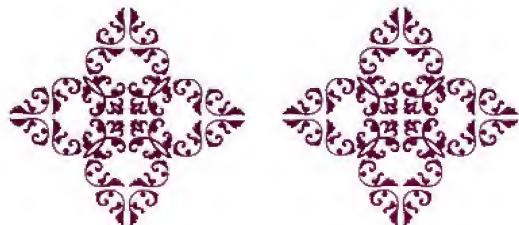
**CAMP** (F8): This option is available only when traveling through the countryside. It allows your party to make a semi-permanent camp. See “Travel and Interaction,” pp27, for details.

## ☞Help and Difficulty Levels☞

In *Darklands* the difficulty level controls the amount of help available. The easier the game, the more help that is available. However, as a reward for selecting the more difficult levels, character improvement occurs somewhat faster, and fame rewards are larger. Of course, with less help, your risks grow larger too.

Frequent changes in help level are ignored in *Darklands*. Advancement and rewards are based on the *easiest* level selected over the past few days or weeks (the exact time period varies, depending on how fast your party achieves certain goals). Just a brief “peek” at an easier difficulty level penalizes you for the entire period.

The “help” provided mainly occurs during interaction. When you hold down the Shift key, appropriate help information appears. See “Travel and Interaction, Interaction Menus,” pp27, for details.



## PARTY INFORMATION

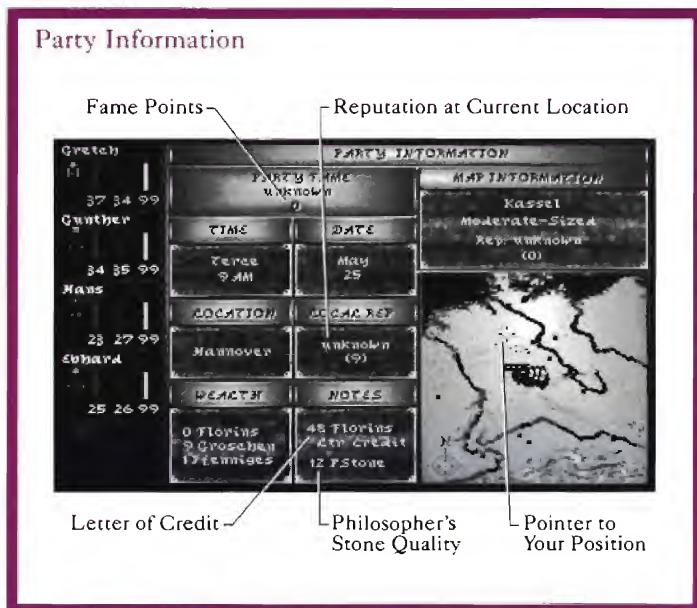
Party information is available on the “Party” menu of the menu bar (hold down the right mouse button), or by tapping the F6 key. It displays general information about your party.

Party information is *not* available during battle.

To leave party information, tap any key or left-click the mouse.

**FAME:** This displays your party’s fame in Greater Germany (the Holy Roman Empire). Fame is an open-ended scale starting at 0. Every important success in *Darklands* increases your fame. Your goal is to achieve the highest possible fame.

**TIME AND DATE:** This displays the current hour, day and month. The year is sometime in the 15th Century (1400-1499). See “Medieval Timekeeping” below for information about medieval “hours” and calendar.



**LOCATION:** This indicates the nearest major city to your party, and is a general aid for finding your location on the map.

**LOCAL REPUTATION:** This indicates your reputation in the nearest city. Local reputation influences the attitude of people in the city, and to a lesser degree those living in the surrounding countryside.

**WEALTH:** This indicates the amount of cash carried by your party. The amount shown does *not* include money stored elsewhere in Germany, nor does it include the value of your Letter of Credit. See “Medieval Money” below for information about florins, groschen and pfenniges.

**NOTES:** If you carry a letter of credit (Ltr Credit), a medieval “bank note,” this indicates the value of the letter. Money carried as a Letter of Credit is easily concealed, but normally you can’t use it until you reach a banker and exchange it for “real” money.

The “PStone” notation indicates the current quality of the philosopher’s stone carried by the party. See “Alchemy” (pp 41) for details.

**MAP INFORMATION:** The small map of Greater Germany highlights your current location with a white circle. With a mouse, you can move the pointer around the map for information. With the keyboard, tap the Tab key to cycle through all the cities.

## Party Leadership

One character is always the leader of the party. The leader acts as spokesperson for the group. Charisma and speaking ability are frequently important to the leader. Other skills or attributes may be important in specific situations. For example, alchemical knowledge might be useful when talking to an alchemist, while religious training and knowledge of Latin could be useful when talking to priests, monks or nuns.

The party leader is indicated by different-colored text in his or her character box. In the character information, “Leader” or “Not Leader” is noted after each character’s name (see “Character Information, Character Information Boards,” pp22, for details).

**HOW TO CHANGE LEADERS:** To change party leadership quickly, simply hold down the Control (ctrl) key and either left-click on the appropriate character box or tap the appropriate function key (ctrl F1 for the first or top-left character box, ctrl F2 for the second, etc., to ctrl F5 for the bottom character box and character). You cannot transfer leadership to a non-existent character.

You can also change leadership in the character information screen by left-clicking on a character box, then left-clicking on "Not Leader." This changes that character to the leader (see "Character Information," the next section).

In battle you can change leadership by holding down Control (ctrl) and clicking on the animating character on the battlefield. Also note that in battle, whenever the party enters "group" mode leadership automatically switches to the first (top left character box) character.

## ❖ Medieval Timekeeping ❖

**HOURS:** The standard "clock" used in the Middle Ages was based on the routine of prayers in monasteries. There were eight of these "hours," or "offices," during the day. In addition, the system of 24 hours was beginning to become common as craftsmen built large mechanical clocks into various public buildings. For simplicity, *Darklands* assigns three "modern" hours to each monastic "hour," as follows:

Matins:	Midnight
Latins:	3 AM
Prime:	6 AM
Terce:	9 AM
Sexts:	Noon
Nones:	3 PM
Vespers:	6 PM
Compline:	9 PM

**CALENDAR:** The old Julian calendar was in effect during this era. This used the same days and months as the modern Gregorian calendar, although due to poor leap year accounting, the Julian was slightly inaccurate. For simplicity, all festivals and holidays always fall on the same day every year, and there are no leap years.

The year is always sometime during the 15th Century (which never ends).

## ❖ Medieval Money ❖

Money is counted in three denominations: gold florins, silver groschen, and silver pfenniges. Because distribution of wealth and wages were so different, comparisons to modern currency are impossible. In general, florins are very valuable, but are used only in large transactions; groschen are fairly valuable and are in daily use; pfenniges are "small change," important only to the very poor.

Conversion between denominations follows the classic medieval pattern of "a dozen and a gross," namely:

12 pfenniges (pf)	=	1 groschen (gr)
20 groschen (gr)	=	1 florin (fl)
240 pfenniges (pf)	=	1 florin (fl)



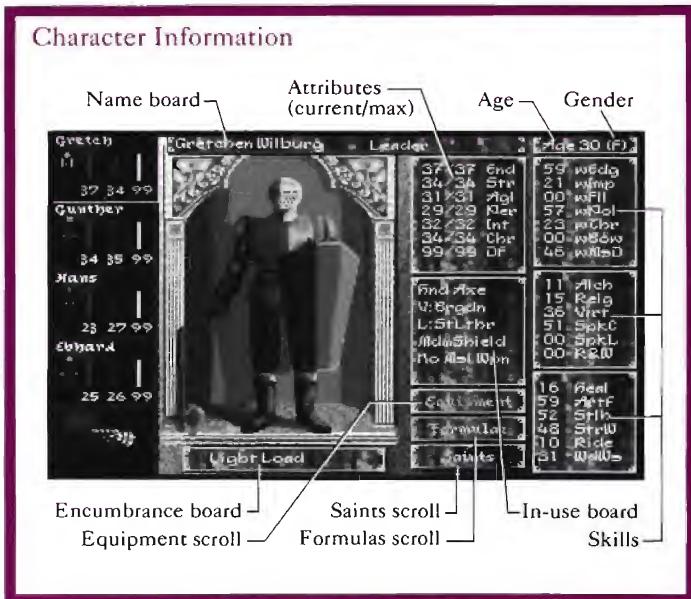
# CHARACTER INFORMATION

**SEEING CHARACTER INFORMATION:** You can view information on any of your characters at any time in the game. The game is automatically paused while you view the information.

To do this, left-click on the appropriate character box on the left side of the screen, or tap F1 through F5 (for the appropriate character).

Once you are viewing character information, you can jump from one character to another with appropriate left-clicks or function keys.

**LEAVING CHARACTER INFORMATION:** To leave character information, you must left-click on the highlighted character box (on the left side of the screen), or tap the function key that matches the currently highlighted box. Doing this returns to you to the game.



## Character Information Boards

Character information is given on a series of boards, some with scrolls attached. To see more detail on a board (or reveal its scroll), left-click the mouse on it, or use the cursor keys to move the highlight box, and press Return.

**NAME BOARD:** This shows the full name of the character. "Leader" indicates the character is the leader of the party, "Not Leader" indicates the character is not the leader.

**AGE AND GENDER BOARD:** This shows the current age of the character in years, and his or her gender: male (M) or female (F).

**ATTRIBUTES BOARD:** This shows the current and maximum attributes of the character. Normally the board just shows the abbreviations, but selecting this board expands it to show the full names. See below for a detailed explanation of each attribute.

**SKILLS BOARDS:** These three boards list the various skills of the character. As with attributes, selecting a board expands it to show the full names. See below for a detailed explanation of each skill.

**IN-USE BOARD:** This board shows the weapons and armor the character is ready to use in battle. It includes both hand-to-hand and missile weapons where appropriate. As above, selecting this board expands it to show full names, rather than abbreviations.

"V:" indicates armor for the character's vitals (head and torso).

"L:" indicates armor for the character's limbs (arms and legs).

This board also shows if any potions or saintly aid are affecting the character and/or equipment.

"Enh" (Enhanced) indicates that one or more potions are currently improving either the character, the equipment, or both.

"Bless" (Blessed) indicates that aid from one or more saints is currently improving either the character, the equipment, or both.

“None” normally means nothing. However, a character without weapons is assumed to have a small knife.

**EQUIPMENT, FORMULAE AND SAINTS SCROLLS:** Selecting these boards opens a scroll that lists the equipment currently carried.

Left-clicking on the top or bottom of the scroll moves the highlight up and down to scroll the list. Similarly, the up-down cursor keys move the highlight up or down.

Left-clicking on the board closes the list. When using the keyboard, move the highlight back to the board (using the right-arrow key) and press Return.

For more details about information contained on the various scrolls, see the appropriate section below.

**ENCUMBRANCE BOARD:** This shows the current weight of items “in use,” and their effect on the character’s performance:

*Light* characters carry 50% or less of their capacity.

*Normal* characters carry 51-100% of their capacity. Normally laden characters suffer a moderate agility loss.

*Laden* characters carry 101-150% of their capacity. They suffer a large agility loss, and lose endurance faster in combat.

*Overloaded* characters have over 150% of their capacity. They have virtually no agility, and in combat both lose endurance quickly and have much reduced weapons skill.

Additional items carried, but not in use, do *not* count toward encumbrance.

**ARMAMENT ILLUSTRATION:** This picture shows the armor and weapons currently in use. Any outer garments worn on top of the armor are removed, to help clarify the armor worn. This means the picture may not correspond to the character’s appearance in battle (where outer garments are shown to help distinguish one character from another).

## >About Attributes

If the character is currently “Not Leader,” you can make this character the party leader by left-clicking on “Not Leader.” The label changes to “Leader” and the text colors change in the appropriate character boxes to the left.

Also see “Party Information, Party Leadership,” pp20, for other methods.

## >About Attributes

All attributes use a 0 to 99 scale. However, adult human norms run from 10 to 40, with the average being 25. All attributes show the current value and the maximum value for that character.

**ENDURANCE (End):** This represents how quickly a character is exhausted. It is very important in battle, since endurance is reduced faster than any other attribute. When endurance reaches zero (0) the character collapses. Characters regain endurance very quickly (within a few days, or less).

**STRENGTH (Str):** This represents physical strength. It is important when using weapons in battle. It also represents physical damage and wounds. As wounds heal a character slowly regains lost strength.

**AGILITY (Agl):** This represents the speed and quickness of the character. It is important for many activities, including climbing and avoiding missiles. Agility is adjusted downward if the character is more than lightly loaded.

**PERCEPTION (Per):** This represents a character’s alertness; his or her ability to sense the current situation. It is an instinct that helps characters anticipate danger or surprise, as well as understand other people on an intuitive level.

**INTELLIGENCE (Int):** This represents the mental abilities of a character. It is very important to alchemists, and whenever the party is dealing with intellectuals or intellectual situations.

**CHARISMA (Chr):** This represents the appearance and physical “presence” of the character. It is extremely useful when interacting with people, especially when try-



ing to convince them of something. Therefore charisma is very useful for a party leader.

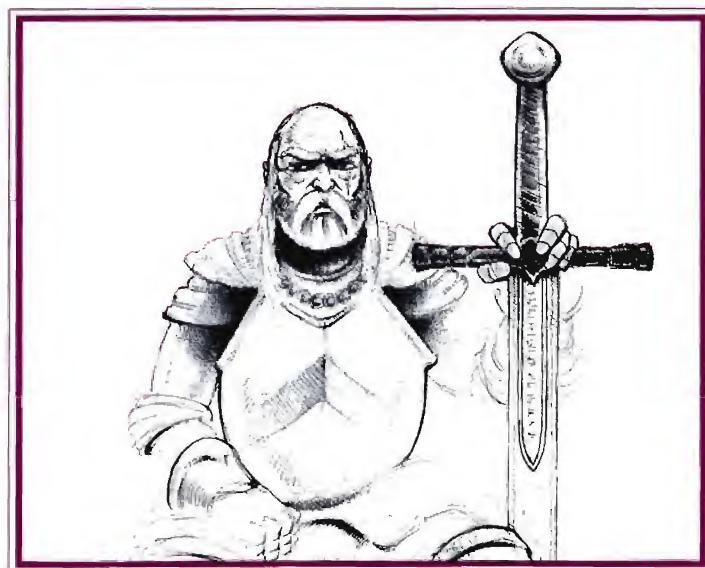
**DIVINE FAVOR (DF):** This represents the amount of “credit” the character has when praying for saintly miracles. It is lost in such prayers, but can be regained. See “About Religion, Divine Favor,” pp46, for more information.

## ❖ About Skills ❖

All skills use a 0 to 99 scale. Adult humans use the entire range, from 0 (totally incompetent) to 99 (nobody better). Most ordinary people achieve 35-60 in important skills, less in secondary skills. Recognized masters or experts achieve 65-90 in their chosen field.

**EDGED WEAPONS (wEdg):** This represents a character’s ability to handle swords, daggers and axes in hand-to-hand (melee) combat.

**IMPACT WEAPONS (wImp):** This represents a character’s ability to handle clubs, hammers, mauls and maces in hand-to-hand (melee) combat.



**FLAIL WEAPONS (wFlI):** This represents a character’s ability to handle flailing weapons in hand-to-hand combat. These are weapons whose damage-producing “head” is attached to a handle by a chain or pivots.

**POLEARM WEAPONS (wPol):** This represents a character’s ability to handle spears, pikes, halberds, and staffs in hand-to-hand combat.

**THROWN WEAPONS (wThr):** This represents a character’s ability to throw axes, javelins, darts or knives at the enemy in combat.

**BOW WEAPONS (wBow):** This represents a character’s skill at firing drawn bows in combat, including regular “short” bows, longbows, and Asiatic composite bows.

**MISSILE DEVICE WEAPONS (wMsD):** This represents a character’s skill at firing crossbows and handguns in combat.

**ALCHEMY (Alch):** This represents a character’s knowledge of alchemy, including various experimental methods and techniques. It is general knowledge, independent of knowing specific formulas.

**RELIGIOUS TRAINING (Relg):** This represents a character’s knowledge of the Church, its institutions, organization, and procedures. It also indicates a growing knowledge of various prayers and observances. This is general knowledge, independent of any specific saint.

**VIRTUE (Virt):** This represents the acceptability of a character’s actions, based on the norms of the age and the general strictures of the Church.

**SPEAK COMMON (SpkC):** This represents a character’s skill in speaking, including the ability to “fast-talk” someone, as well as the ability to say things diplomatically. For simplicity, characters are assumed to know the local, everyday language (in *Darklands* this is usually German).

**SPEAK LATIN (SpkL):** This represents a character’s knowledge of Church Latin, the universal European language for both religious and intellectual activity.

**READ AND WRITE (R&W):** This represents a character’s ability to read and write whatever languages he or she speaks. Literacy was a separate and not altogether common skill in this era.

**HEALING (Heal):** This represents a character's skill at treating and dressing wounds. This is everyday, practical knowledge, not a "magical" healing power. The rate at which characters regain strength while resting depends on the single highest healing skill in the party.

**ARTIFICE (Artf):** This represents a character's understanding of fine devices, including the ability to assemble, disassemble and manipulate them. Such fine devices include locks, trap mechanisms, etc.

**STEALTH (Stlh):** This represents a character's ability to move quickly and almost invisibly, taking advantage of every shadow while avoiding actions that make loud noises.

**STREETWISE (StrW):** This represents a character's familiarity with city life, and the expectations of city citizens. It makes interaction easier and more effective with city residents.

**RIDING (Ride):** This represents a character's skill at riding a mount, usually a horse. Riding skill and horse quality combined yield a character's ability to catch or escape someone (or some thing).

**WOODWISE (WdWs):** This represents a character's familiarity with country life, woodlore, the habits of wildlife, and the ability to "read" the ground for tracks or danger.

## >About Equipment

Equipment is listed by its name, quality ("q") and how many are carried.

Quality is rated on a 1 to 100 scale, with 0 being worthless. Normal, everyday quality is 25. Quality over 40 to 50 is so outstanding that most people would feel an item had special religious or magical powers. Such quality is extremely rare and valuable. All potions are rated quality 25, 35 or 45, depending on the sophistication of the formula used.

Equipment also has a weight (not shown) that includes a bulk factor. By changing which items are "in use" and observing the encumbrance effect, if any, you can decide which items to use.

**USING EQUIPMENT (a key):** When the equipment scroll is open, you can take an item and put it on the in-use board,

replacing whatever is there. This is how you select (or "ready") different arms and armor.

To do this with a mouse, left-drag the item from the scroll to the in-use board. (That is, move the pointer to the item desired, hold down the left button, drag the mouse with the button still down to the in-use board, then release the button.) The item now appears on the in-use board, replacing whatever item was there.

To do this with the keyboard, move the highlight to the item desired, then tap the "a" key.

**UN-ARMING (u key):** You can remove weapons or armor from the in-use board. With the mouse, left-drag the item from the board back to the equipment scroll (which must be visible). With the keyboard the procedure is different: just highlight the item on the scroll and tap the "u" key.

A character without any weapons is assumed to have a small knife.

**USING POTIONS (p key):** You can use some alchemical potions to improve your own equipment or attributes. To do this, highlight the potion in your equipment list, then left-click with the mouse or tap "p" on the keyboard. An appropriate change will occur in your character or equipment, depending on the potion, and "Enh" (Enhanced) appears on the in-use board. Typically this change lasts for one day.

**RELICS:** Some relics have special attributes, but you always receive the advantages automatically. The advantages usually apply to the person carrying the relic. Without their special advantages, some relics are still useful as high quality weapons. For more about relics, see "About Religion," pp45.

**TRANSFERRING EQUIPMENT (1-5 KEYS):** An item can be transferred from one character to another. However, temporary additions to your party will not "lend" or otherwise transfer their equipment to one of your characters. Equipment cannot be transferred to a non-existent character: if the character box is empty, you cannot transfer anything to it.

To transfer an item with the mouse, left-drag the item from the scroll to the appropriate character box (on the left side of the screen) and release. The item disappears from the



equipment list. If you check character information for that other character, you'll see the item at the bottom of his or her equipment list.

To transfer an item with the keyboard, move the highlight to the item desired, then press the appropriate *number* key ("1" for the character in the top left box, "2" for the character in the box next from the top, etc. to "5"

for the character in the bottom box. Use the number keys across the top of the keyboard, *not* those on the numeric keypad.

**DISCARDING EQUIPMENT (d key):** Your character can always abandon any item of equipment. To do this, either left-click on the item or move the highlight to the item, then tap the "d" key.

Items discarded in this fashion can *never* be recovered. Therefore, be careful before you throw away an item. Instead, you may wish to find a reliable person who can store items for you. City or village innkeepers frequently perform this service.

## ❖ Alchemical Formulas ❖

Alchemical formula names provide the original inventor and a general title relating to its effect. Each inventor has a slightly different version of the formula.

Left-click the mouse on a formula name (or select with up/down cursor keys and tap Return) to see a detailed description of that formula. Left-click or press Return again to return to the information boards.

**FORMULA DESCRIPTION:** This is a detailed description of the formula's ingredients and mystic number. Mystic numbers range approximately from 75 to 200; higher numbers indicate more difficult formulas.

Formulas are used to create potions. The formula description includes a summary of that potion's effects.

Characters cannot actually create alchemical potions at this time. They must camp or take up residence somewhere first, then spend one or more days mixing potions. See "About Alchemy," pp41, for more information.

## ❖ Saints and Prayer ❖

When the "Saints" scroll is open, you see all the saints known by that character. As with alchemical formulas, to see a detailed description, left-click the mouse on a saint's name, or select with up/down cursor keys and tap Return.

**PRAYING TO SAINTS:** The detailed description of a saint includes the miraculous benefits you could expect. Unlike alchemy, you can attempt to pray to a saint at any time.

The "DF Remaining" value shows how much DF you *would* have, if you pray now. As this indicates, praying to a saint reduces your DF (divine favor), which may limit your ability to pray further. Fortunately, DF can be recovered.

Left-click the mouse or use cursor keys and Return to select which option you prefer:

*More divine favor is spent:* This increases the amount of DF (divine favor) the character "spends" while praying.

*Less divine favor is spent:* This decreases the amount of DF the character "spends" while praying.

*Pray now....:* The character begins praying. The DF is immediately reduced to the appropriate amount. Prayer results occur quickly.

*Don't pray right now:* This returns you to the information boards.

See "About Saints," pp45, for more details about praying to saints. See "The Universal Church, Darklands Saints," pp88 for more information about specific saints.



## TRAVEL AND INTERACTION

### Map Travel

When travelling across the wide expanses of Greater Germany, you see a small representation of your party on an overhead-view map. To move using a mouse, left-click on any spot on the map. The party immediately moves cross-country to that location. If you left-click at the very edge of the map, the party moves toward that point, and keeps moving until you left-click some other location to stop them.

To move using the keyboard, hold down the cursor keys. The keys of the numeric keypad can be used, permitting diagonal movement.

As you move, time passes. When travelling through difficult terrain, times passes quickly, as it takes more time to travel the same distance. Conversely, when travelling by road, or through open country, less time elapses because you're moving faster.

If you are not moving on the map, no time passes (exception: see Ambushes, below). To "waste time" at a particular spot, either walk back and forth or camp (see below).

The map view has two special options unavailable anywhere else: Ambushes and Camping.

**AMBUSHES (F7 key):** You can halt your party and wait in ambush for an enemy. When using a mouse, hold down the right button and select "Ambush" from the "Party" menu. When using the keyboard, tap the "F7" key.

Ambushes are only productive in a specific area where interactions lead you to believe that such a tactic might be useful. As you wait, time will pass. If you achieve nothing after a few days, the chance of achieving anything is probably quite small.

To end an ambush, tap any key or left-click the mouse. This resumes normal activities on the map.

**CAMPING (F8 key):** Travelling any significant distance takes days of "real life" time. For simplicity, overnight camps, eating, etc., occurs automatically as you travel.

At times you may wish to rest in one place for a longer period, usually to regain strength, pray for more divine favor, etc. To do this select "Camp" from the party menu, or tap the

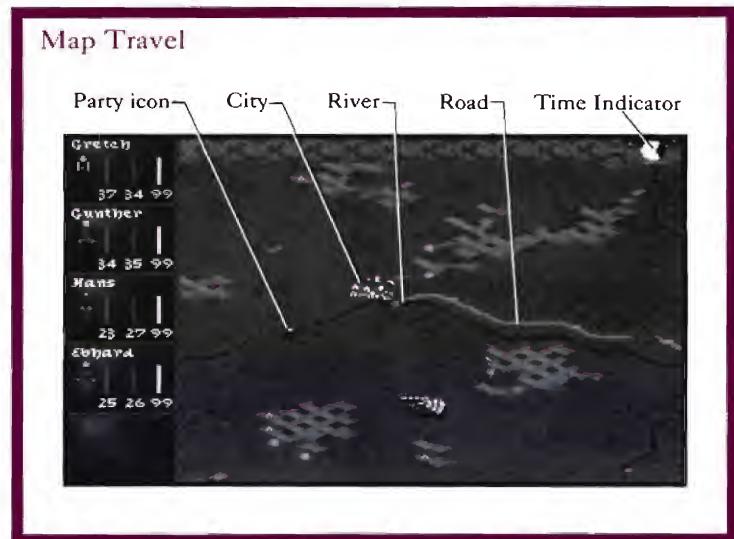
F8 key. When you "camp," you spend one or more days in the same place. See "Staying Here," below, for details about your options.

**INTERACTIONS:** At various times your journey may be interrupted by random meetings, events, etc. In addition, whenever you reach a notable location, including all cities, villages, etc., interactions automatically occur.

### Interaction Menus

Interactions describe various situations, and sometimes provide a variety of options. If "Visuals" (in the "Game" menu of the menu bar) is set to "Full," you must left-click or tap Return to see the options. If "Visuals" is set to "None," you only see descriptions and options, no pictures. The latter is *not* recommended unless your computer is quite slow.

**SELECTIONS:** The mouse or up/down cursor keys highlight various options. To select the highlighted option, left-click or tap Return.

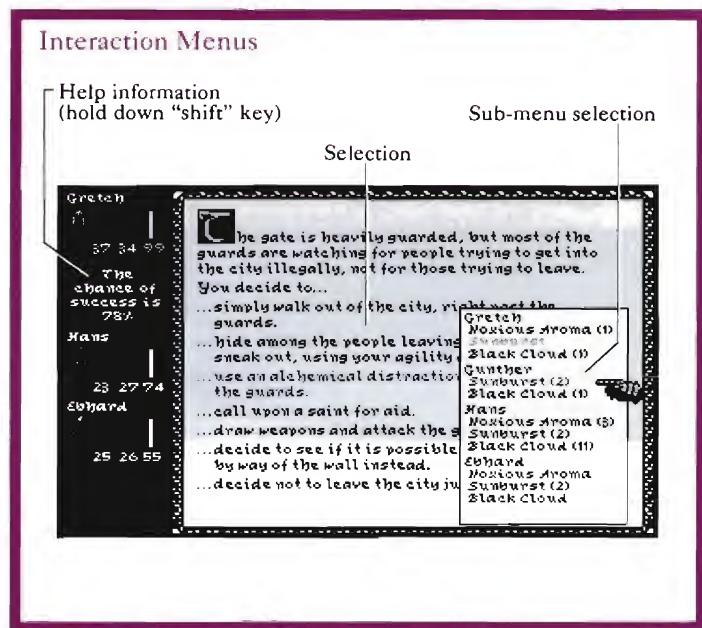


Some options have sub-menus. When these appear, you must move horizontally (straight across the screen) until the mouse is within the area before you can select and left-click. Using the keyboard, the right/left cursor keys move the highlight into or out of the sub-menu. The up/down cursors move the highlight within the sub-menu. As before, to select an option tap Return.

**HELP:** When interaction options exist and "Difficulty" (in the "Games" menu of the menu bar) is set to "Basic" or "Standard," holding down either shift key displays helpful remarks about the immediate results of that option. "Expert" difficulty gives no hints.

*Basic* displays the exact probability of success. Of course, you must still judge the likely effects of this success or failure.

*Standard* displays general comments about your chance of success. Again, it only applies to the immediate action, not the overall effect.



*Expert* displays no hints. You make your own decisions, based purely on your judgement of the situation.

Help messages are positioned on the character who will lead or interact. If the message is positioned across all five characters, the entire party will work together in this task, and success is based on an average of their abilities.

**SAINTS AND POTIONS:** During interactions, some menu options permit use of potions, while others assume prayer to saints. In order to correctly apply the potion or saint to the situation, you *must* select the appropriate option here in interaction (not in character information).

You can still go to any character information screen and use potions or pray to saints normally (see "Character Information" for details), but this only provides general aid. To apply saintly aid to a specific situation, you must select it from the interaction sub-menu, not character information.

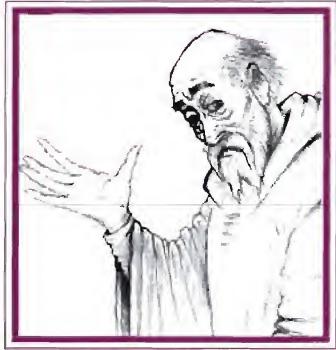
As with saints, some interactions allow the use of potions for special effects. Again, to get the benefit, you must select the appropriate interaction sub-menu.

**INTERACTION RESULTS:** A variety of results are possible. In some cases you may return to the map, while at other times you may move on to another interaction. You may also see specific results messages, or become involved in a battle.

## Item Exchange Scrolls

This special display appears whenever you attempt to buy or sell goods, or if your party stores items or recovers them from storage. It also appears if your party finds items after a battle, either on a defeated enemy, or inside chests and treasure troves.

First use a left-click or the left-right cursor keys to select which scroll to use. The upper scroll is the list of items found, stored, or for sale. The lower scroll is the list of items currently carried by the character.



Next, move through the scrolling list to find the specific item to buy, sell, or move. Left-click at the top or bottom of the scroll to move the highlight, or use the up-down cursor keys.

Finally, select one of the actions beginning with a crimson son letter, either with a left-click, or by tapping that letter on the keyboard.

**PURCHASE AN ITEM / GET AN ITEM...** : This is only available when the upper scroll is active (i.e., an item in that scroll is highlighted). It causes the character to gain that item, paying any appropriate cost.

### Item Exchange Scrolls

The screenshot shows the "Item Exchange Scrolls" window. On the left, a vertical scroll lists party members: Gretchen (11), Gunther (37 34 99), Hans (34 35 99), and Ebhard (23 27 99). To the right, two horizontal scrolls show items. The top scroll is active, displaying "Gretchen holds the piece of DFI, 12 gr, 2oz." with options to "Purchase an item", "Sell an item", "Ask about a special item", "Barter For another person", and "Leave". The bottom scroll shows "The Swordsmith offers..." with items like "394spF Falchion 25q 4lbs", "394spF Short-Sword 25q 3lbs", "190spF Ronnard 25q 1lbs", and "127spF Dagger 25q 1lbs". Below that, it says "Gunther has..." with items like "203spF Long-Sword (1) 25q", "330spF Falberd (1) 25q", "118spF Black Cloud (1) 30q", and "453spF Thunderbolt (1) 30q".

Left-click here to give or sell item highlighted on the lower scroll. (If an item is already highlighted on lower scroll.)

Current party leader does the bargaining; changing leaders can change prices.

Left-click here to leave.

Left-click here to take or buy item highlighted on the upper scroll. (If an item is already highlighted on upper scroll.)

Items available to the party.

Change party member; changes whose possessions are listed on lower scroll.

Note: To move between scrolls using the keyboard, use left and right cursor keys.

**SELL AN ITEM / PUT AN ITEM...** : This is only available when the lower scroll is active (i.e., an item in that scroll is highlighted). It causes the character to transfer the item to the upper scroll, or give it to the owner of that scroll. The party gains any appropriate selling price.

Characters who temporarily join your party cannot use this option. They insist on keeping their personal possessions! The only way to get rid of items carried by such characters is to discard them (see "Character Information, Character Information Boards," pp22).

**BARTER FOR ANOTHER PERSON / CACHE ANOTHER PERSON'S ITEMS / DISTRIBUTE LOOT TO ANOTHER PERSON:** This allows you to change which character's items are displayed on the lower scroll. You can buy, sell, or transfer items with the character of your choice—except, of course, characters who are just temporary members of your party.

**LEAVE:** This ends the exchange session.

## Staying Here

When your party camps in the countryside (see "Camping" above), or takes up residence at an inn or similar resting place, you see the "Staying Here" options. These options are selected and resolved one day at a time.

To select options with a mouse, left-click on a character name, then left-click on the activity desired for that character. The text changes to describe what the character will do for the day. Continue selecting options and characters until you are satisfied. Some options may be available to some characters, while prohibited to others.

To select options with the keyboard, use the cursor keys to move the highlight and the appropriate letter key to select the activity.

**JUST RELAX** is a default "do nothing" option that allows you to recover from any exhaustion.

**REGAIN STRENGTH** is only allowed to wounded characters. It represents a full day of rest. The rate of recovery is related to the character with the best healing skill in the entire party.

**PRAY FOR DIVINE FAVOR** is allowed to anyone whose DF (divine favor) is below maximum. Prayer helps restore divine favor.

**ALCHEMY WORK** allows the character to mix new potions. See “About Alchemy,” pp00, for details.

**EARN A LITTLE MONEY** allows the character to find a short-term job, to earn a little money. You will see the best job the character can find in the city, with the pay per day. Jobs can be exhausting. Work may cost a character some endurance daily.

**GUARD THE CAMP** only applies when camping in the countryside. It helps you to conceal and protect your presence, decreasing the chance that some unpleasant person or thing will find you.

**TRAIN AND STUDY** allows the character to work to improve a certain skill. Selecting this option produces a list of the possible skills the character could attempt to improve.

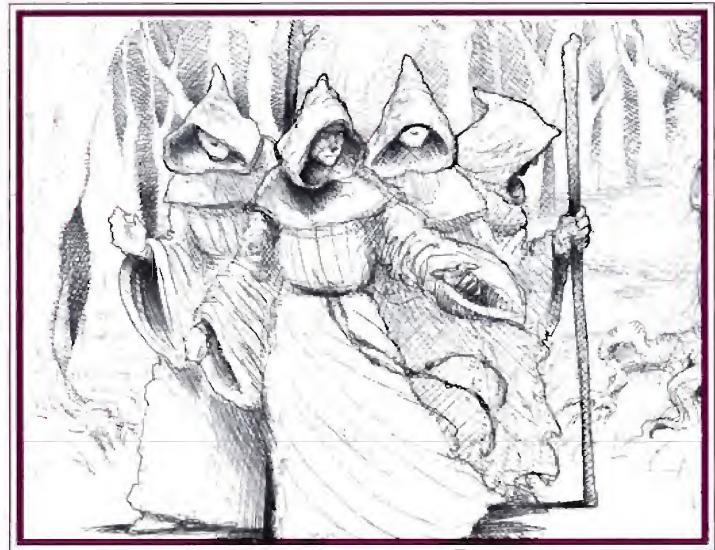
### Camping (“Staying Here”)

Left-click on character (in the left column),  
then left-click on right column option.



Leave without spending  
a day doing assignments.

One day passes, with party doing  
the assigned options, as shown above.



This option exists only if the party has already found someone willing to train or tutor certain people in certain skills. In other words, first you search for instructors, then you return to the inn and “take up residence” to accomplish the training.

When you see the list of skills available for training, select one by left-clicking with a mouse, or by using the cursor and Return keys.

**SPEND A DAY, DOING THE ABOVE:** This option activates all the selections made. One day passes, and each character does his or her appointed tasks. You must select this option to actually perform the activities.

**LEAVE:** Selecting this option means you’ve decided against spending a whole day on these tasks. You return to the other available options.



## BATTLE

Medieval Germany is a dangerous and violent place. Therefore, from time to time, your party must fight. Sometimes you can even start a fight. Such options are frequently available in interactions.

You observe all battles from an overhead view. The ceiling and walls are "cut away" to show your characters and the enemy moving and fighting.

The battle begins "paused," that is, with the action frozen and the party leader highlighted. You can evaluate the situation, then give orders to your leader, and/or any other characters, as you wish.

When you're ready to watch the action, either tap the Space bar key, or select "Resume" in the "Orders" pull-down menu. This starts the battle. You see all moving and fighting in "real time"; that is, both sides move and fight simultaneously.

To pause the battle again for new orders, simply select any of your characters (with a mouse-click on the character, or by tapping the appropriate number key), or tap the Space bar. The action stops and you can give new orders.

Remember, battles begin in "pause," waiting for your orders. You must tap the Space bar or select "Resume" from the "Orders" pull-down menu to start the action.

### Basic Battle Controls

Battles have two states: "orders pause" and "real-time action." During the orders pause, action is frozen, allowing you to examine the situation and select orders for your characters. During real-time action, you watch the characters act out your orders, fight the enemy, etc.

**ORDERS PAUSE:** You can create an "orders pause" at any time during the battle.

The Space bar is an orders pause "toggle." If the battle is paused, tap the Space bar to resume real-time action. If the battle is in real-time, tap the Space bar for an orders pause.

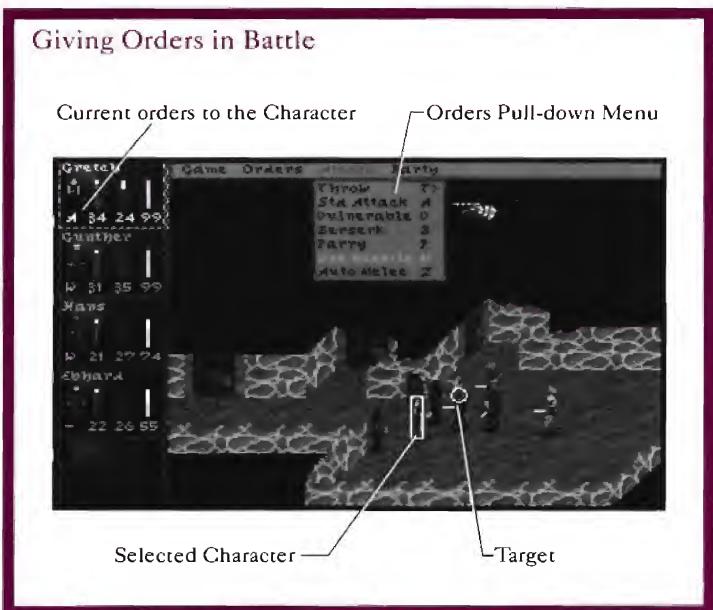
Selecting any character also causes an orders pause. You select a character by left-clicking on his or her animating

figure on the battlefield. You can also select a character by tapping the number key for that character of the party (1 through 5). The character in the top left character box is number 1, the next down is number 2, etc. Use the number keys across the top of the keyboard, *not* those on the numeric keypad.

**BATTLEFIELD VIEW:** Normally the battlefield view tries to follow the party leader. However, you can scroll the entire battlefield view using the mouse or keyboard.

If using a mouse, move the cursor near the edge of the battlefield. The pointer will turn into an arrow. Now tap the Shift key. Each tap scrolls the battlefield a small amount. If you hold down the Shift key, the battlefield scrolls a large amount.

If using the keyboard, just hold down the Shift and tap the appropriate cursor key.





**GIVING ORDERS:** Orders normally have three steps: (1) select the character, (2) give the order, and usually (3) select the target or destination.

*Select the Character:* To select a character with the mouse, left-click on the character on the battlefield; if using the keyboard, press the appropriate number key (1 through 5). Whenever you use the Space bar to pause, or at the start of the battle, the party leader is already selected automatically. You can switch to another character by simply clicking or hitting the appropriate key for that character.

If the character is currently not in view, the battlefield automatically centers the view on the character when you tap the appropriate number key.

*Give an Order:* To give an order with the mouse, hold down the right button to reveal the menu bar. Continue holding the button down to choose an appropriate selection from the "Orders" or "Attack" sub-menus.

If using a keyboard, you can either press the appropriate letter key for the order, or use the menu bar. To use the menu bar with the keyboard, first tap F10 to show the menu bar, then use the cursor keys to navigate the highlight, and finally tap Return to conclude your selection.

If an order does not require a target or destination, giving the order is all you need do. Select another character or restart the real-time action.

*Give Target or Destination:* Most orders require a target toward which characters move, attack, use missiles, throw

To return the view to "follow the leader," you must select a party leader (by tapping ctrl F1, ctrl F2, etc., or holding down the Control key and clicking in the appropriate character box).

*Warning:* Whenever the mouse is active, be *very careful* with your use of the Shift key. You can unintentionally scroll the battlefield by holding the Shift down too long.

potions, etc. If a target is required, the screen pointer changes shape. When using a mouse, the pointer doesn't change shape until you hold down the left mouse button. If using the keyboard, use the directional cursor keys (including the numeric keypad, with allows diagonal movement with 1, 3, 7 and 9) to position the pointer.

You can maneuver the target pointer around the screen, to discover the "legal" targets available. Certain orders are not allowed in certain locations; an error symbol indicates this. To finish your selection with a mouse, just release the left button. To finish your selection with the keyboard, tap the Return key (to finish for that character). To finish orders for the entire party, tap the Space bar instead.

In some cases the target pointer only appears on certain parts of the battlefield. This is another way of indicating that only those areas or enemies can be targeted.

*Notes:* The "Orders" pull-down menu has various general options. Only those currently allowed appear in black. The "Attack" pull-down menu has specific combat instructions for individual characters.

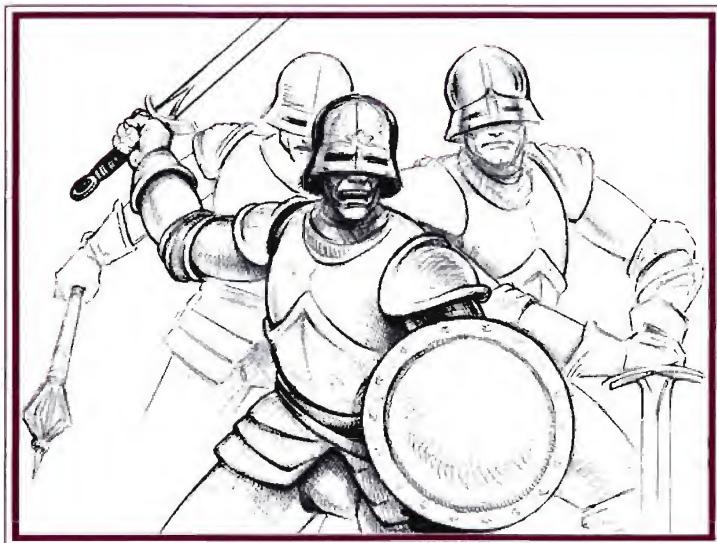
The current order for a character appears as a letter in the lower left corner of the character box. This letter is the same as the keyboard key for that order.

**CHANGING CHARACTERS:** When you finish giving orders to one character, you can immediately select another.

*Warning:* If you *don't* finish giving orders to a character and select another character, the first character (who only got partial orders) will be quite confused. The character may do nothing, or do something entirely unexpected. The most frequent error is to forget to specify a destination for movement, or a target for an attack. Therefore, make sure orders to one character are finished before you start another.

**CANCEL ORDERS-IN-PROGRESS:** To cancel orders in progress, just tap the Escape (Esc) key. This erases any orders partly given. However, once orders are completed, the only way to erase them is to give the character new orders.

**RESUME REAL-TIME ACTION:** To end the orders pause and resume real-time action, either select "Resume" from the "Group" pull-down menu on the menu bar, or tap the Space bar.



## Basic Battle Information

**PROXIMITY MESSAGES:** When a character moves close to a stairway, ladder, door, trap (if the character spots it), exit, etc., a message noting this appears in the character box on the left side of the screen.

These messages have a lower priority than battle results. Therefore, if the double bar graphs showing combat results are present, no messages will appear. Of course, a character could still use stairways, exits, etc. Check the "Orders" pull-down menu to see which items are in black (i.e., are currently allowed).

**DAMAGE VALUES:** As you watch the "real time" combat action, whenever a character is hurt by a blow, missile, alchemical effect, etc., a small number (the damage value) appears above him or her. This is the amount of endurance lost by the character. Strength losses may also occur, but strength losses are never larger than endurance losses.

White numbers indicate endurance loss to one of your characters.

Red numbers indicate endurance loss to one of your opponents in the battle.

**BAR GRAPHS:** When one of your characters engages an enemy, either in hand-to-hand combat or with missile fire, the bar graphs for endurance, strength and divine favor in the character boxes double. In each category the left bar shows the current level for your character while the right bar shows the current level for the enemy. The bar graphs only show percentage remaining; just because the enemy level is below yours doesn't necessarily mean the enemy is weaker.

## Default Orders and Independent Action

At the start of a battle, no characters have orders, but the battle is in "orders pause" with the party leader already selected. You can ignore the opportunity to give orders by tapping the Space bar or selecting "Resume" from the "Orders" pull-down menu.

If a character lacks orders, he or she simply stands in place, bravely ignoring any missiles. If an enemy comes close enough to fight hand-to-hand, the character will fight back.

**INDEPENDENT ACTION:** Once a character is in hand-to-hand combat, the character continues fighting until the enemy is downed. Then the character will seek out additional enemies to attack, the nearest first. Of course, you can always give the character other orders.

## Exploring: The "Orders" Pull-down Menu

The "Orders" menu contains options for moving about, opening doors, moving up and down stairways (or ladders), examining chests, picking locks, looting the fallen, etc. Orders only appear in solid black when they are allowed. Therefore, if there are no stairways to climb or doors to open, those options always remain gray and unavailable.

To fight the enemies, use the "Attack" menu (see below). The "Orders" menu is for moving about and performing non-combat tasks.

**RESUME (Space bar):** This ends the orders process and resumes real-time action.

**{NICKNAME} FINISHED (Return key):** This ends the orders for the named character, but the battle remains paused. If the orders were incomplete, the character reverts to his or her previous orders.

You should now give more orders or select “Resume” (above).

**ENEMY INFO (e key):** This is a toggle. Selecting this once replaces the character boxes with information about the enemies you face. Selecting this option again restores the character boxes.

**WALK TOWARDS (w key):** This moves an individual character (or the entire party if moving as a group). You must specify a destination.

Normally just an individual character moves. However, if “Travel as Group” or “Travel Single File” are selected, the party moves as a whole. See “Group Travel,” below, for details.

While moving, the character or group might encounter enemies. If they get within hand-to-hand combat range, the character or group always stops and fights.

Also see “Exploration and Real-time,” below.

**FLEE TOWARDS (f key):** This is the same as walking, except the character or group does not stop to fight enemies. Instead, they keep moving toward their destination. This means enemies can strike while the character or group does not strike back. Once the character or group reaches their destination, they stop “ignoring” enemies and fight those who come within reach.

**HALT (h key):** The selected character stops and stands in place. He or she defends against the first enemy that attacks hand-to-hand, but otherwise does nothing.

**TRAVEL AS GROUP (g key):** See “Group Travel,” below, for details.



**TRAVEL SINGLE FILE (q key):** See “Group Travel,” below, for details.

**USE DOOR (u key):** The selected character (if moving individually) or the leader (if a group) opens the nearest door. This option only appears if a door is very close to the appropriate character.

When moving as a group, the door used is always that closest to the leading character.

If the door is locked then “Pick Lock” and/or “Dissolve lock” may appear. If the door has a trap, then “Disarm Trap” may appear. It’s always wise to view this pull-down menu before trying to open a door.

Sometimes doors lead to hidden areas previously invisible to your view. In this case, using the door may cause the character to disappear through the door, as if he or she were using a stairway. See “portals,” below.

**USE STAIRS (u key):** The selected character (if moving individually) or the leader (if as a group) uses the nearest stairway (or ladder). This option only appears if the appropriate character is at a stairway. When moving as a group, the stairway used is the one closest to the leading character (character number one).

Stairways (and ladders) are *always* portals to different areas. See “portals,” below, for details.

**OPEN CHEST (o key):** The selected character (if moving individually) or the leader (if as a group) opens a chest to see what’s inside. This option only appears if the appropriate character is beside a chest.

If there are any items of value or interest, the Item Exchange Scrolls appear (see “Universal Controls and Menu Bar” for more information). When you select “Leave” from the Item Exchange Scrolls, you return to your battlefield view.

Although virtually all chests are locked, most of them can be broken open. Only extremely solid, sturdy chests require you to pick the lock before opening the chest. In this case, “Pick Lock” appears on the “Orders” menu. If a chest is protected by a trap, “Disarm Trap” appears on the “Orders” menu.

**PICK LOCK (p key):** The selected character (if moving individually) or the leader (if as a group) attempts to pick the lock on the nearest chest or door. This option only appears when a locked door or chest is close to the character.

Lockpick attempts depend upon the character's tools and artifice skill. A character can attempt this without special tools, but the chances of success are usually quite small. If a lock is protected by a trap, "Disarm Trap" appears on the "Orders" menu.

**DISSOLVE LOCK WITH EATER-WATER (d key):** The selected character (if moving individually) or the leader (if as a group) uses an Eater-Water potion to dissolve a lock. This is equivalent to picking it. Naturally, the option is only available if the appropriate character is at the lock and has at least one Eater-Water potion.

Eater-Water cannot be used on traps.

**DISARM TRAP (d key):** The selected character (if moving individually) or the leader (if as a group) attempts to disarm a trap on a chest. This option only appears when a trapped chest is close to the character. Disarming depends primarily upon a character's artifice skill, and secondarily upon his or her intelligence and perception. In all cases it is affected by the difficulty of the trap.

Sometimes characters may stumble over traps in the floor or a wall. Perceptive characters with artifice skill are most likely to notice these. If you spot such a trap before triggering it, adjust your movement to avoid it or suffer the consequences. These traps cannot be disarmed.



**SURRENDER (s key):** When you select this option, your entire party surrenders to the enemy. Your characters will lay down their arms and cease resisting the enemy attack.

*Beware:* In some cases, the enemy will show no mercy. Most humans will

take prisoners, but wild animals may kill and/or eat one or all of the party.

**LOOT BODIES (l key):** Whenever you defeat a group of enemies, you automatically have a chance to loot their bodies. However, in large battles you may wish to leave some loot behind, then return later and get more. To do this, move the character or group next to the "body" symbol, then select this option (or tap the "l" key). The item exchange scrolls appear (see "Travel and Interaction, Item Exchange Scrolls," pp28, for details).



**EXIT BATTLEFIELD (x key):** If the selected character is on the edge of the battlefield, this option is available. Selecting this option causes the character to leave the battle area. In effect, the character "runs away" from the enemy.

If all functional characters have run away, leaving only the exhausted behind (i.e., characters who collapsed because their endurance reached zero), the battle automatically ends. Those left behind may suffer a variety of fates, depending upon the enemy. Looting, imprisonment and/or death are common.

**CANCEL LAST ORDER (Escape or Esc key):** This cancels whatever order you are giving either to an individual or to the entire group. The character or group reverts to their initial orders.

**ORDERS WITHOUT TARGETS:** From the above group, the only orders that require targets are "Walk towards" and "Flee towards." All others automatically apply to the nearest target available. In most cases the orders aren't even available unless the character or group leader is very close to the target.

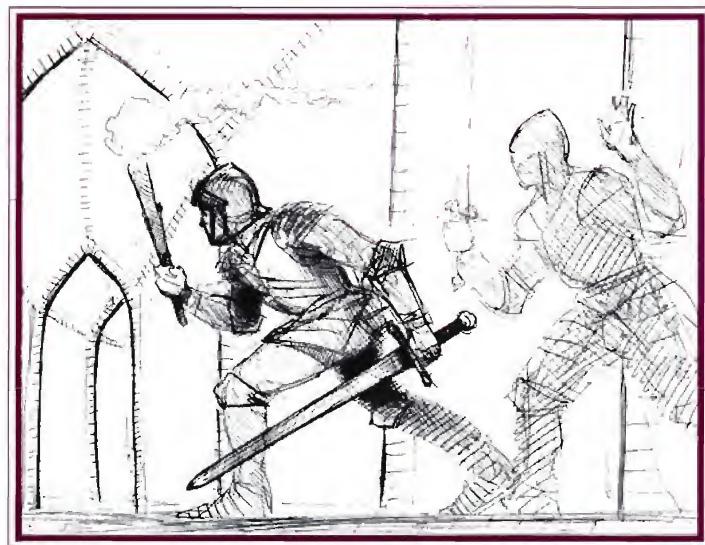
## ❖ Portals ❖

When a character uses stairways, ladders or certain special doorways, he or she temporarily disappears from the battlefield. The character is now waiting at the other end of the

stairway, ladder or doorway for the rest of the party. When all surviving members of the party use that same doorway, stairway, or ladder, the entire view changes to the new scene, at the other end of the stairway or door.

**RECALL FROM A PORTAL:** After a character “uses” a door or stairway, he or she can be recalled. Tap the appropriate number key (1 through 5) to see the character, then tap the “u” key (or select “Use stairs” from the pull-down menu) to return. This is the only order available for that character. The character will reappear in the door or on the stairway. You cannot use the mouse to recall characters — because the characters are beyond your view!

**MULTIPLE PORTALS:** Different doors and stairways may lead to different places. If part of the party uses one, and part another, the view will never shift to a new scene. Instead, you will still see the old battlefield, with nobody on it! In this case, recall some of the characters and move them to join the others, until everyone has passed into the same door or stairway.



## Group Mode

Group mode exists as a convenience for long journeys. It allows you to move the entire party as a group, rather than one by one. Group mode is prohibited if any character is fighting hand-to-hand. In fact, group mode is a disadvantage whenever combat threatens. You should give individual orders when fighting.

Whenever you select a group mode (either “Travel as group” or “Travel Single File”) the number one character (the character whose box is in the upper left) automatically becomes the group leader.

**TRAVEL AS GROUP (g key):** This means the party moves in a fan-formation that allows everyone to face front. It is an adequate fighting formation, but cannot fit down narrow corridors.

To begin “Travel as group,” use the mouse or keyboard to select it from the “Orders” pull-down menu, or tap the “g” key. If you look at the pull-down menu again, you’ll see a check-mark beside “Travel as group.”

Next, you must select a target for the group. The characters in the party will attempt to assemble into a group here. If the party is too widely scattered, some or all may be unable to assemble. In that case, give “Walk toward” orders to individuals to move them closer together, then try again.

**TRAVEL SINGLE FILE (q key):** This means the party moves in single file, with character number one in the lead, then number two, etc., until the last brings up the rear. Although usually poor for fighting, this is the only way a group can move through narrow passages.

To begin “Travel Single File,” use the mouse or keyboard to select that from the “Orders” pull-down menu, or tap the “q” key. If you look at the pull-down menu again, you’ll see a check-mark beside “Travel Single File.”

Unlike “Travel as group,” you need not specify a target point when entering this mode. The characters in the party automatically assemble behind the number one character (character whose box is in the upper left on the screen). Of course, you still must use destinations when moving (see below).

As in “Travel as group,” if the party is too widely scattered, some or all may be unable to assemble. In that case, give “Walk toward” orders to individuals to move them closer together, then try again.

**MOVING A GROUP:** When the party is in either group mode, it is always waiting for movement orders. Simply left-click the mouse to specify the destination for “Walk toward” movement. If using the keyboard, you must tap “w” or select “Walk toward” from the “Orders” pull-down menu, move the cursor to the destination, then tap Return.

Also see “Exploration and Real-time,” below.

**SPECIAL ORDERS:** In addition to moving, if the group approaches certain points, other exploration orders are possible. The options available depend on how close the current *Party Leader* is to the object. Other members of the group cannot open doors, disarm traps, etc. To have them do such, you must either change the party leadership or give them an individual order (which ends group mode).

If you use a stairway, ladder or special doorway in group mode, the entire party moves through the portal.

**Important:** Unlike individual orders, you do *not* select a specific character for group orders. Instead, you just give one thing: either a destination (for movement), or a specific action (for other exploration orders, like opening doors, etc.).

**EXITING GROUP MODE:** To leave group mode, you must deliberately “turn off” group mode by selecting the check-marked item on the “Orders” pull-down menu (either “Travel as group” or “Travel Single File”). This toggles “off” the group mode. Tapping the appropriate group movement key (g or q) also toggles off group mode.

## Fighting: The “Attacks” Pull-down Menu

All attack orders are given to individual characters. All attacks must have a target, selected by either a mouse left-click or the cursor and Return keys. If you specify none, then the orders are discarded and the character reverts to his or her previous order.

**THROW POTION (t key):** The selected character throws a potion at any allowed target. Characters cannot throw over friendly or enemy characters. A less skillful thrower must avoid friends by a wide margin, while a more skillful thrower can throw right past friends with a very narrow margin.

This option includes a sub-menu of all potions that character can throw. To select the target point, left-click the mouse, or use the cursor keys (including the numeric keypad) and tap Return.

If the target is a location, the thrower ignores the movement of friends or enemies and simply throws at that spot. If the target is a person, the thrower maintains his or her aim at that person, trying to throw at where they are moving toward, rather than their current position.

Notice that throwing skill determines how much friends or enemies block a throw. Assuming the target can be hit, the potion hits the target, regardless of skill level. Please bear in mind that throwing a potion takes time (potions require the alchemist to do some special mixing, lighting, etc., just before they are thrown).

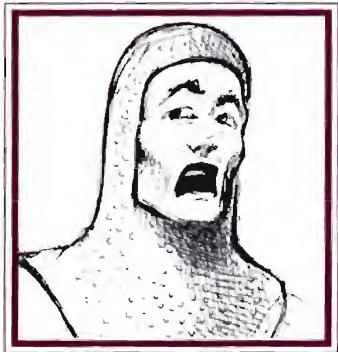
**ATTACK (a key):** The selected character attacks a specific target in hand-to-hand combat. To choose the target, left-click the mouse, or move the pointer with cursor keys and tap Return. The target must be a specific enemy. If the enemy is not adjacent, the attacker will move toward that enemy, seeking to engage them.

Standard “attack” orders tell the character to balance his or her fighting methods, alternating between strikes and parries. The character simply tries to hit the target, without aiming for any special spots.

Characters cannot attack enemies out of sight or otherwise invisible.

**VULNERABLE (v key):** This is a special tactic for hand-





to-hand combat. Orders are given exactly like the normal attack; i.e., an enemy target must be specified by mouse left-click, or by moving the pointer with cursor keys and tapping Return.

“Vulnerable” orders tell the character to seek out weak spots in the target’s armor. Therefore, the character’s strikes are slower, the chance of hitting is unaffected, and the chance of penetrating is higher. The character’s defensive abilities are equivalent to the standard attack, above.

**BERSERK (b key):** This is a special tactic for hand-to-hand combat. Orders are given exactly like the normal attack.

“Berserk” orders tell a character to make an all-out attack on the enemy, as quickly as possible, without regard to his or her safety (like the Viking “Berserkers” of the Dark Ages). The character strikes more swiftly, with an increased chance of hitting, but is much more vulnerable to being hit. Of course, the character’s armor will still deflect or reduce the damage of non-penetrating blows.

**PARRY (p key):** This is a special tactic for hand-to-hand combat. Orders are given exactly like the normal attack; i.e., an enemy must be specified by mouse left-click, or by moving the pointer with cursor keys and tapping Return. This specifies which enemy the character primarily faces, and against whom any counter-attacks are directed.

“Parry” orders tell a character to concentrate on defense. This reduces the chance of enemy hand-to-hand strikes hitting the character. However, it also means the character’s strikes occur more slowly, and have less chance of hitting. Should the character hit, penetration and damage abilities remain normal.

**USE MISSILE (m key):** The selected character fires his or her missile weapon against a target selected by either a mouse left-click, or by moving the pointer with cursor keys

and tapping Return. This includes thrown weapons, bows, crossbows, and/or handguns.

The character fires missiles as fast as possible at that target, as long as circumstances permit.

As in throwing potions, missiles cannot be fired directly through friends or enemies to a target beyond. Also like potions, the firer’s skill determines how close he or she may aim past an obstruction to hit a target farther away.

A character firing missiles who is attacked hand-to-hand automatically stops firing and switches to the hand-to-hand weapon listed on the in-use board (see “Character Information,” pp22). The character then adopts “Attack” orders against this enemy.

**ENLIGHTENED SELF-INTEREST:** During hand-to-hand combat, your characters sometimes make their own decisions about which attack orders to use. You may see either “Attack” or “Vulnerable” orders change to either “Attack,” “Vulnerable,” or “Parry” depending on the situation. You can override these orders by giving your own, of course. “Parry” or “Berserker” orders are never overridden by enlightened self-interest. A character retains these orders until given new ones.

## ❖ Special Situations ❖

**MANY-ON-ONE:** In hand-to-hand fighting, sometimes multiple enemies are fighting one character, or vice versa. In such cases, the “one” attempts to defend against all, while still striking his or her selected target. However, the one’s chance of hitting declines, while each of the “many” has an improved chance. The amount of change depends on how many simultaneously face the one.

Therefore “many-on-one” situations are extremely favorable to the “many.” Achieving such situations against the enemy, and avoiding them against yourself, is an important tactic. In general, no more than three or four characters can find space to surround and simultaneously attack one character.

**TRAPS:** In certain areas your party may encounter deadly traps. Perceptive characters may see them before triggering them, allowing you to avoid them or disarm them.

Unperceptive characters are more likely to blunder into them. If this happens, quickly change your orders to prevent any more characters from blundering into the trap!

## Exploration and Real-time

If none of your party is involved in hand-to-hand combat, you may take advantage of certain special controls while the battle is in real-time. These controls are intended solely to make exploration easier in larger areas. They are *not* recommended whenever combat threatens. Remember, to use these controls you must switch from orders pause to real-time.

**PARTY LEADER REAL-TIME CONTROL:** If group mode is *not* active, then during non-combat real-time you can maneuver the party leader (only) around the battlefield by left-clicking destinations with the mouse. If using the keyboard, simply hold an appropriate cursor key to direct the leader's movement. In both cases, the leader is using "Walk toward" orders.

The leader can also perform various exploration orders (depending on what's near the leader) using either the pull-down menu or the appropriate keyboard key.

**GROUP REAL-TIME CONTROL:** When group mode is active, you can maneuver the entire group on the battlefield.

When the group mode is "Travel Single File," group movement works just like that of the party leader above. That is, left-click destinations with the mouse, or hold down cursor keys to control movement directly. The movement you control is the party leader. The remainder of the party follows behind.

When the group mode is "Travel as group," you can still left-click destinations with the mouse. With the keyboard you must tap the "w" key, use the cursor keys to indicate the destination point, then tap Return.

In both "Travel Single File" and "Travel as group," the current party leader can perform various exploration orders using either the pull-down menu or the appropriate keyboard key.



## Battle Results

**COLLAPSE:** A character collapses whenever his or her endurance reaches zero (0). Once unconscious, the character will not reawaken for the duration of the fight. Unconscious characters are *not* dead.

**DEATH:** A character dies whenever his or her strength reaches zero (0). Once dead, a character can *never* be resurrected. No amount of potions or saintly aid can reverse death. Therefore, you are advised to provide such aid to a character *before* they die!

**VICTORY:** You are victorious when all enemies are "downed" by collapse and/or death. In simple fights this ends the battle. In more complex situations, it may only eliminate the immediate problem. In either case, you normally get a chance to examine the bodies, taking anything that appears useful. See "Travel and Interaction, Item Exchange Scrolls," pp 28, for details.

**ESCAPE OR RETREAT:** Your party escapes, retreats, or bypasses the enemy whenever all survivors exit the battle-



field. The fate of any characters who collapsed on the battlefield depends on the situation. They might crawl away unobserved and rejoin you. Other times they are captured. Sometimes they are put to death or eaten!

**SURRENDER:** This option also ends the battle. Again, results vary, depending on the motivations of your opponent(s). With luck, at least some may survive.

**DEFEAT:** This option occurs when the entire party collapses and/or dies on the battlefield. Collapsed characters are entirely at the mercy of the enemy. Results vary, depending on the opponent.

**DEATH OF ALL:** If the entire party dies, then the game ends. If the party's fame is sufficient, it is recorded in the Hall of Fame. Now it's time to create some new characters and try again!



## ABOUT ALCHEMY

Alchemical skill allows a character to create potions. However, the character must also know alchemical formulas, have the ingredients specified in those formulas, and have sufficient time to actually mix the potions.

Knowledge of alchemical formulas is one of the most precious things in this era. Formula knowledge cannot be traded between your characters. However, ingredients, the “Philosopher’s Stone” catalyst, and the resulting potions are items easily exchanged. Therefore, whenever a character makes potions, the ingredients carried throughout the party are available for use. In addition, the resulting potions can be transferred from the maker to any other character in the party.

Alchemists of varying competence can be found throughout Germany. It is possible to buy potions from them, rather than making them yourself. However, this can be costly, assuming you find alchemists with appropriate skills.

Some alchemical potions can be used to improve a character’s attributes and/or equipment. Alchemical potions may also be useful in interactions. Finally, alchemical potions can be used as weapons in battle to discomfort, demoralize or actually injure enemies.

### Formulas

Go to character information to see a summary of any formula a character knows (see “Character Information, Alchemical Formulas,” pp 26 for details).

**NAMES:** Each formula has a general descriptive name, plus the name of the original inventor. There are multiple inventors possible for each general name, which means there are various formulas for the same potion! Actually, the potions are not exactly the same — they too vary somewhat, as indicated by their quality value.

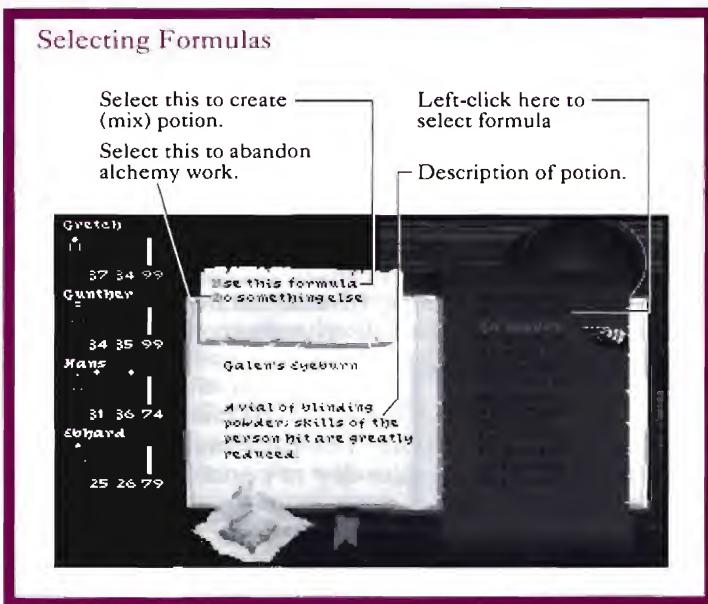
**MYSTICAL NUMBER:** Each formula has a “mystical number.” The higher the number, the more difficult the formula, and therefore more alchemical skill is required for success. However, higher mystical numbers also mean either a higher quality potion or a more powerful effect.

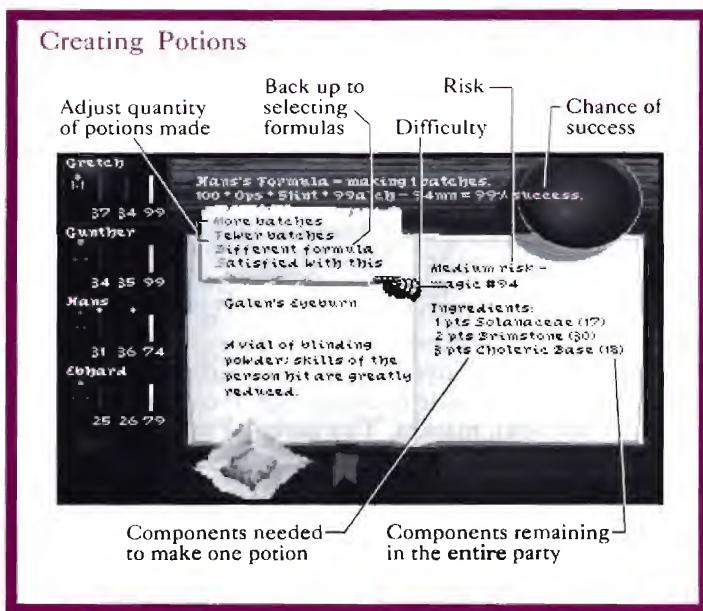
**EXAMPLE:** Galen’s Eyeburn and Nicolas Flammel’s Eyeburn both produce blinding effects, but the ingredients are subtly different. Galen’s formula has a lower mystical number, but results in potions of lower quality.

Of course, both Eyeburn formulas have a far lower mystical number than any formula for Breath of Death, because those potions are far more powerful than any Eyeburn.

### The Philosopher’s Stone

The “Philosopher’s Stone” is actually a fine mineral powder that is a universal catalyst. It is shared equally among the party, and is only valuable to alchemists. It cannot be bought or sold on the open market. The party’s Philosopher Stone has a quality level, starting at zero (0); this value can increase during play. Many alchemists use a “stone” of levels 5 to 15;





level 20 or more is quite exceptional. See "Notes" on the Party Information Screen (tap F6) for the current quality of "stone" carried by your party.

A higher quality "stone" increases the chance of success when making potions. An alchemist always uses a little "stone" in every process. However, because it is a catalyst, the "stone" is not consumed. Instead the alchemist recovers it for reuse. Therefore, the only issue that concerns you is the current quality of your "stone."

## Making Potions

Creating potions takes time. The party must take up residence for at least one entire day to permit the making of potions. Typically this is done by either camping in the wilderness or taking up residence at a city inn.

When you take up residence, you see the "Staying Here" options (see "Travel & Interaction, Staying Here,"

pp29). If a character selects "Alchemy work," you begin planning which potion to create.

**SELECTING FORMULAS:** Your first option is which formula to use. First left-click on one of the abbreviated formula names on the scroll (to scroll the list, left-click on the top or bottom of the scroll). If using a keyboard, move the highlight with a cursor and tap Return.

Now left-click on one of the options that begins with a crimson letter:

*Use this formula:* This makes the selection and begins potion creation, see below.

*Do something else:* This aborts any alchemical work and returns you to the "Staying Here" options.

**POTION CREATION:** When you "use this formula," the scroll closes to show a detailed explanation of the formula selected.

Across the top of this view is an equation that depicts the character's chance of success with this formula. The chance of success is calculated as 100 plus the quality of the Philosopher's Stone (ps), plus the alchemist's intelligence (int), plus his or her alchemical skill (alch), minus the mystical number of the formula. Making more than one batch at a time may reduce the chance of success.

Below this summary, to the right, is a list of the various ingredients that are used to make the potion. In parenthesis is the number of ingredients that will remain among the party after you mix the potion. Since everyone in the party shares ingredients, the totals reflect those in the entire party, rather than just the ingredients carried by the alchemist.

*More batches:* Left-clicking here or tapping the "m" key allows you to make more than one potion simultaneously. Although an alchemist can only mix one formula per day, the amount he or she mixes can be small or large, depending upon the amount of ingredients you wish to consume. Larger batches may reduce your chances of success.

*Fewer batches:* Left-clicking here or tapping the "f" key allows you to make fewer batches.

*Different formula:* Left-clicking here or tapping the "d" key returns you to "Selecting Formulas," above. There you

can select a different formula instead, or you can forget about formulas entirely and return to “Staying Here” to choose another option.

*Satisfied with this:* Left-clicking here or tapping the “s” key saves your alchemical plans for the day and returns you to “Staying Here,” where you can select options for other characters.

**FINAL CREATION AND RISK:** When you return to “Staying Here,” your potion creation plans are summarized for the character. The potions are not actually made until you select “Spend a day, doing the above.” At that point, success or failure is judged.

Potion creation includes an element of risk. If the risk is low, then failures usually have modest affects; the ingredients are wasted, but nothing worse happens. If the risk is moderate or high, then failures can result in larger disasters. Characters and/or their equipment may be damaged, the camp or inn may become uninhabitable, etc.

If the creation is successful, the creator now has those potions among his or her equipment. They can be transferred to the other members of the party, as desired.

## Using Potions

Potions can be used either as part of character information, during interactions, or during battle. Potions can be used either from character information, during interactions, or thrown in battle. Typically, different potions are used in different places.

**POTION USE DURING CHARACTER INFORMATION:** Only potions that improve a person or improve a piece of equipment can be used here. Typically, these potions add to a character’s attributes, or to equipment quality, for one day (24 hours).

If you are using a mouse, left-drag the potion from the equipment scroll onto the in-use board (like a weapon or armor). This applies the potion to the character, or to the appropriate piece of equipment on the armaments board. Naturally, make sure the desired piece of weapon or armor is on the armaments board before using the potion!



If you are using the keyboard, use the cursor to highlight the potion, then tap “p.” This applies the potion to the character, or an item on the armaments board, as appropriate.

You cannot directly use a potion on another character. Instead, you must first transfer the potion to that character, then select character information for that character, then transfer the potion from the character’s equipment to the in-use board.

**POTION USE DURING INTERACTION:** When interacting, certain options may “pop up” a sub-menu of various characters and their alchemical potions. The sub-menu shows the potions possessed by the character. Simply select (by left-clicking or cursoring the highlight and hitting return) the specific potion of the specific character.

Arsenic





At lower difficulty levels, the sub-menu may include faded potion names. These are potions that could be used, if only you had them! At the lowest difficulty level, some potion names may appear in red. These represent potions that could be used, and for which you know the formula. You can't use them because you haven't mixed up any (this is a hint to find the ingredients and start mixing!).

**POTION USE DURING BATTLE:** When fighting, you can give characters orders to

throw certain potions. See "Battle, Fighting: the Attack Pull-down Menu," pp37, for details.

While in battle you can also go to character information and use a potion on the character or equipment from that view. While this has no effect on the enemy, it may aid your character. See pp25 for details.

**VIEWING CHANGES:** When the "Show changes" option is on (see "Universal Controls and Menu Bar, The 'Game' Pull-down Menu," pp18), any attribute and skill changes caused by potions appear in the character boxes. However, if this option is turned off, the changes simply happen. You must look at the appropriate character information to see the current state of the character.

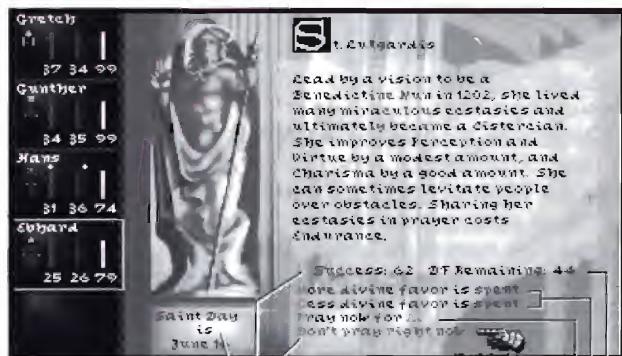


# ABOUT RELIGION

Many miraculous aids are possible through religion, especially by praying for the intervention of a saint. Praying to saints is possible at any time in character information (see pp26). However, additional benefits are possible if a character takes advantage of a prayer opportunity during interactions.

Prayer reduces a character's "divine favor" (DF). However, this is easily regained. In *Darklands*, think of divine favor as a type of "credit," which is "spent" on prayer, and can then

## Praying to Saints



Praying on saint's day  
reduces DF cost.

Percentage chance of  
success (varies with  
DF spent).

Left-click here to  
leave without praying  
(no DF spent).

Left-click here to actually  
pray (DF is spent).

Left-click to adjust the  
amount of DF spent while  
praying to this saint.

Amount of Divine Favor  
(DF) that would remain  
after praying to this saint.

be regained through various deeds. The speed at which it is regained varies with the religious training of the character.

Virtue is also important. Unlike DF, it is not spent. Instead, a character's virtue determines which saints and relics can be used, because each saint and relic demands a different level of virtue.

## Knowledge of Saints

A character must "know" about a saint before he or she can pray for miracles. This knowledge is a mystical understanding, and cannot be transferred from one character to another. The saints currently known by a character are available in character information (see "Character Information, Saints," pp26).

Characters can "learn" about new saints by seeking those who know about them. Monasteries, universities and cathedrals are the best sources, but you may find additional opportunities. There are over 130 different saints that can be discovered, although it is unlikely that anyone will learn them all.

## Praying to Saints

A character can pray for saintly aid either in character information, or as an interaction option. Interaction success results in normal benefits, plus the special effects that occur in the interaction. Prayer from character information only provides the normal benefits; you can never pray from character information and get interaction benefits.

Prayer is also possible during battle. Simply go to character information and pray from there, then return to the battle and observe the results.

**PRAYER AT CHARACTER INFORMATION:** When you select a saint in character information (see "Character Informa-

### Calcination





tion, Saints,” pp26), the view changes to an image of the saint, a brief description, and other information.

The “Success” value here represents the percentage chance of success. If the character lacks sufficient virtue for this saint, the chance of success is 0%. If the character has sufficient virtue, the chance of success is 1% or more. If a character’s virtue

is higher than the minimum, success chances improve commensurate with the advantage in virtue.

The “DF Remaining” value shows the amount of divine favor (DF) the character will have *after* the prayer. This is almost never equal to the current value, since most prayers consume at least a certain minimum amount of DF.

*More divine favor is spent:* Selecting this option (with a left-click or by tapping the “m” key) increases the amount of DF spent during the prayer.

*Less divine favor is spent:* Selecting this option (with a left-click or by tapping the “l” key) decreases the amount of DF spent during the prayer. This decreases the chance of success, but increases the amount of DF Remaining. The chance of success cannot drop below the initial value, nor can the DF Remaining be increased beyond the initial value.

*Pray now for...:* Selecting this option (with a left-click or by tapping the “p” key) causes the character to make the prayer. If the prayer must be directed at a single character, a sub-menu appears, listing the possible recipients. If the prayer benefits the entire party, you just see “Pray now.”

*Don’t pray right now:* Selecting this option (with a left-click or by tapping the “d” key) means the character does not pray. You return to the previous view, in this case character information.

**PRAAYER AT INTERACTION:** Some interaction options include the possibility of prayer. A sub-menu appears, showing the saints applicable in this situation. Saints known by a

character appear in dark print, while those currently unknown appear in pale print. If all applicable saints are unknown, a simple list purely in pale print appears. At higher levels of difficulty (i.e., with less “help” selected, see “Universal Controls and Menu Bar, The ‘Game’ Pull-down Menu,” pp18), the pale print “unknown” saints may not be available.

If you select the sub-menu option, you see the same view of the saint, with the same options as before. If you select “Pray now for...” and are successful, in addition to the normal effects you also receive a special effect appropriate to the interaction. This special effect almost always affects the entire party, even if the normal effect is restricted to just one character.

**VIEWING CHANGES:** When the “Show changes” option is on (see “Universal Controls and Menu Bar, The ‘Game’ Pull-down Menu,” pp18), any attribute and skill changes caused by a saint appear in the character boxes. However, if this option is turned off, the changes simply happen. You must look at the appropriate character information to see the current state of the character.

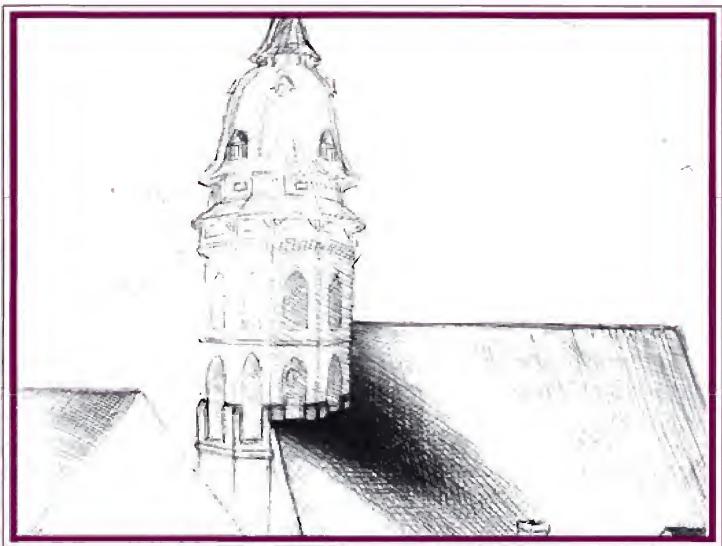
Some saints cause many changes; eventually you may wish to temporarily turn off “Show changes” before praying to a saint, then turn them on again afterward.

## ❖ Divine Favor ❖

Divine Favor (DF) is a kind of holy “credit,” which a character uses when asking a saint for aid. DF ranges from a minimum of zero (0) to a maximum of 99. A prayer to a saint reduces that character’s DF. The new, lower amount is noted when you view information about a saint.

Certain despicable actions may also cause a character to lose a certain amount of divine favor. Be wary of acting too “evil”—it may influence your ability to call saintly aid. In





some cases, the maximum allowable DF may also be reduced to something less than 99.

When calling upon a saint, a character must use at least a certain minimum amount of DF. A character may also be limited in the maximum amount of DF that can be used.

**REGAINING DF:** Divine Favor is regained daily at a very slow rate. You may improve this by spending days in prayer (see “Travel and Interaction, Staying Here,” pp29), by going to confession, and/or going to mass. Donations to churches and cathedrals may also improve your divine favor.

The speed at which a character regains divine favor depends on his or her religious training. Characters with better training regain favor faster, those with less (or none) regain it more slowly.

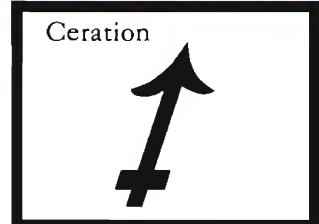
**SAINT DAY:** If a character asks for saintly aid on the day of that saint, the DF cost is much less.

## Relics

There are dozens of different religious relics. Many of these are useful items in their own right, such as St. Adrian’s Sword, St. Bathildis’ Staff, etc. In addition, relics may provide certain miraculous benefits.

**SAINTLY AID BENEFITS:** Possession of a relic may reduce the DF cost of praying to that saint. However, most relics require the bearer to have sufficient virtue to gain this advantage. The virtue requirement is frequently high, so only the most virtuous will benefit when invoking a saint. Relics related to Christ or Mary are beneficial when invoking any saint.

**AUTOMATIC ATTRIBUTE & SKILL BENEFITS:** In special cases, a sufficiently virtuous character carrying a relic may see a temporary improvement in attributes and/or skills. Examine character information to see these effects. These effects are automatic for whomever carries the relic.



## GOALS AND REWARDS

### Fame

The ultimate goal in *Darklands* is fame. Events, adventures and quests come and go. Someday everyone must die, even your adventurers. What matters is how they are remembered by future generations. Will your party be known as immortal heroes, like Roland, Beowulf, or Siegfried, or will they be forgotten?

In *Darklands* fame is awarded numerically. The higher this number, the greater your fame. You can review your current fame by looking at Party Information (on the pull-down "Party" menu, or just tap the "F6" key). In addition, fame is useful during the play of *Darklands*. For example, interacting with certain people may be easier if your party is famous.

**FAME AWARDS:** Naturally, the greater your accomplishments, the more fame your party accumulates. Dealing with large problems, such as robber-knights, dragons, revolts, and



witches produces more fame than collecting a lost relic or escorting a merchant.

The size of an award also depends on the level of help selected (see "Universal Controls and Menu Bar, Help and Difficulty Levels," pp19). The less help you use, the greater your reward in fame.

The death of a character does *not* affect your fame. The party can continue, possibly recruiting another person. However, if the entire party is killed, then their current fame is the final value.

Party fame is not affected if you dismiss individuals from the party and replace them with others. For simplicity, fame is attached to the party as a whole, not specific people.

**FAME LEVELS:** As your numerical score increases, your general level of fame may also increase. The levels, from lowest to highest, are: Unknown, Barely Known, Slight Reputation, Modest Reputation, Good Reputation, Slight Heroes, Modest Heroes, Great Heroes, Famous Heroes, Storied Heroes, and finally Legendary Heroes.

### Character Development

Characters in *Darklands* will improve, but improvement has its limits. All attributes and skills have an upper limit of 99. However, attributes almost never rise about the original values, except temporarily due to potions or saints. Skills, on the other hand, will improve steadily. Skill improvement occurs in situations where that character's skill is seriously tested (i.e., there is an element of risk). Successful use of a skill gives a greater chance of improvement, and somewhat larger improvements as well. However, as skills get higher, the chance of improvement grows smaller. For example, advancing 20 to 21 is fairly easy, while advancing from 95 to 96 is extremely difficult.

Similarly, you can accumulate riches by various means. Wealth is useful, but is not a goal of the game. No great fame is attached to wealth. For example, the Fugger banking house was wealthy beyond the wildest dreams of many kings, yet they are almost forgotten today.

Your party's reputation around Germany also changes constantly. The worst reputation level possible is -99, where the city guards may try to kill you on sight and many doors are closed to you. A reputation of 0 means you are unknown, just a faceless traveller. A reputation of 99 means you are the local heroes of the day, favored by the government and citizenry. Many things previously difficult may now be easy.

Your reputation in a city influences your reception not only in that city, but in the nearby countryside as well. Furthermore, if a single nobleman controls multiple cities, your reputation in one city may affect your reputation in the other cities of that principality. Your reputation in an Imperial Free City is always unique to that city and the local countryside.

The sages of the era suggest that you content yourself with the challenges and adventures of *Darklands*, accept what improvement comes your way, and then await new challenges elsewhere in Europe (in forthcoming sequels).

## Adventures, Aging & Retirement

**ADVENTURES:** There are many possible adventures in *Darklands*. Some are unrelated; it is possible to have different problems occurring simultaneously. Many of these problems are so common that they occur again and again, although in different places and somewhat different guises.

You should be aware that witchcraft in Germany is a pervasive evil, whose roots go very deep. Dealing with this problem will be complex, but the potential rewards in fame are larger than anything else. It is also a problem that once solved, is not likely to quickly reappear.

On the other hand, do not assume that every situation you stumble across is related to witchcraft. There are many other problems in Germany. Your judgement must be your guide.

**AGING:** It is possible to continue adventuring almost indefinitely. There are always new problems, new areas of unrest, where one can earn fame and hone skills. Your adventures could last years, if you have the stamina. After five years of adventuring, characters who are thirty or older suffer modest aging penalties to some attributes. The older the character, the greater the penalties. The exact time and

place is unpredictable. If aging reduces any attribute to zero, the character has suffered a fatal illness and dies.

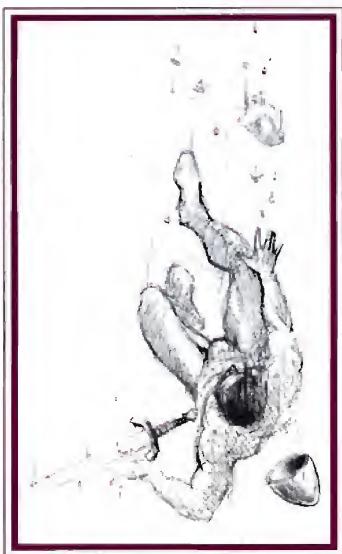
**RETIREMENT:** Your party may retire at any time, simply by returning to the inn at any city. Retirement ends the game and graphically shows your current level of fame. However, it also creates a "saved-game" file. This means you can "come out of retirement" simply by selecting that saved-game file.

Even if you have finished with *Darklands*, do not erase the saved-game file. Forthcoming sequels may use this file.

**DEATH:** Sooner or later, your adventures may lead to the death of one or more characters. Dead characters can *never* be resurrected. Saintly aid or alchemical potions only have temporary effects. Therefore, they cannot reverse death. If your party has fewer than four characters, you can recruit new characters at the inn (Gasthaus) of any city.

## Hall of Fame

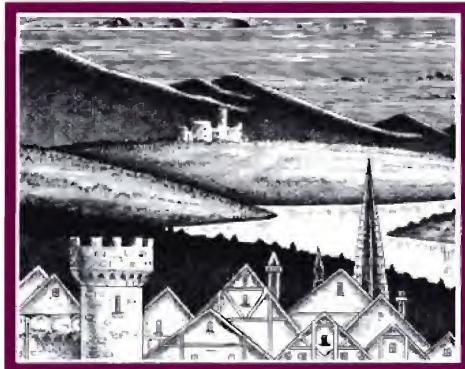
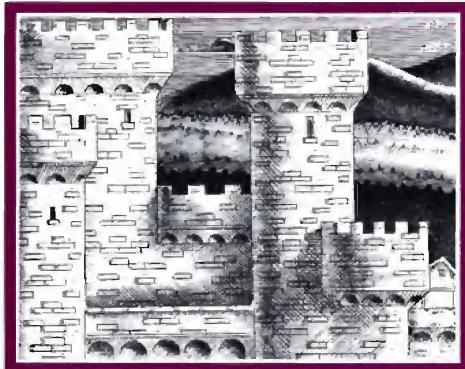
This records the fame of your current party, and allows you to compare it with other heroes and parties. As your party gains fame, they take their proper place in the memories of mankind. If you find your position discouraging, the appropriate left-click or keypress can clear the Hall of Fame of all prior entries.



Congelation







# Gothic Germany

## ◆◆◆ INTRODUCTION ◆◆◆

### ~ Medieval Europe ~

*Darklands* is set in the late Middle Ages from 1400 to 1499 (the 15th Century AD). This is an era of noble knights and rapacious warlords, of universal Catholicism and three competing Popes, of superstitious peasants and rich merchant princes, of soaring castles and dark forests. Above all, the Middle Ages was that half-millennium of time when Europe reorganized itself into new kingdoms out of the wreckage of the Roman Empire and the chaos of the Dark Ages. It is an era of relative stability before the accelerating changes that ultimately formed modern Europe.

Until 400 AD Europe was part of the Roman Empire, at first barbarian hinterlands, then sophisticated and thriving provinces, and finally overrun by new barbarians from Eastern Europe and the Russian steppes. Throughout the Dark

Ages (circa 500-1000) various kingdoms rose and fell, including Charlemagne's Empire (800-814). Around 1000 AD Europe stabilized into a recognizable form. Most historians find this a convenient dividing line between the "Dark Ages" and the "Middle Ages."

Medieval Europe was an era where religion and culture changed very slowly. So slowly, in fact, that most people expected no change at all. The Church was universal, society was feudal, and a man's place in the world was ordained by birth. Noblemen owned the land. They were trained warriors with expensive equipment. Peasants were protected by nobles, worked the land, and rarely were free to leave it. Small cities and towns held craftsmen, fairs for travelling merchants, and other facilities too costly or specialized for each hamlet. Even politics changed slowly. Almost every



locale had a king or emperor (except the northern Italian city-states), but they were constrained or sometimes controlled by their nobles. Despite all the wars, marriages and treaties, the general political boundaries in 1050 AD were similar to those of 1450 AD.

Of course, no entity is entirely static. By the 1400s (the century of *Darklands*)

European and international trade was commonplace, along with banking. After the vast population loss due to the Black Death in the late 1300s, cities were growing. Monetary wealth was at least as important as noble landholdings, to the ruin of many minor nobles. The Renaissance was blooming in Italy, and from there gradually penetrating throughout Europe. At the end of the century (in 1492) explorers would discover a new world. With hindsight historians can see the foundations of medieval society crumbling, but few people at the time understood this. For them, it was simply a time of uncertainty and danger.

## ❖ Greater Germany ❖

Germany did not exist as a nation until 1870. However, a wide part of medieval Europe spoke the German language, or at least was colonized and ruled by Germans. Historians sometimes call this region "Greater Germany." Of course, German was not the only language. In Bohemia and along the Polish border some peasants spoke Slavic tongues, and throughout Europe the church and intellectual institutions used Latin.

In the 15th Century, Greater Germany was the Holy Roman Empire. To be crowned Emperor, a noble must first be elected "King of the Germans." The Empire originated with Charlemagne in AD 800, who ruled all of modern Europe except southern Italy and Britain. However, various

political disasters and upheavals had reduced the Empire to just its German lands, including those eastern territories colonized by Germans at the expense of the native Poles, Czechs, and other Slavic peoples.

The Holy Roman Empire was surrounded by other kingdoms. To the east was strong, expansionistic Poland. They were reconquering their homeland from the Teutonic Knights, slowly pushing westward. Down the Danube (Donau in German) River lay Hungary, whose nobles were active participants in Imperial politics, and vice versa. Northern Italy was a patchwork of warring city-states. Switzerland was unifying itself with innovative armies of citizen-soldiers who were developing a reputation as the most formidable fighters in Europe. To the west was the Duchy of Burgundy, ostensibly subject to the King of France, but actually a rich, powerful and independent kingdom including modern Holland, Belgium, and the lands west of the Rhine all the way to Switzerland. Along the Baltic Sea was the Kingdom of Denmark, ostensibly united with Norway and Sweden; but this weak union was gradually dissolving.

Greater Germany was a land of contrasts. Population was dense along the four great rivers of the realm: the Rhine, the Danube, the Elbe and the Oder. Of these, the Rhineland was the most sophisticated, with much of its population concentrated in or around many large, old cities. The Danubian plains had some of the best farmlands anywhere in western Europe, plus a variety of useful trade connections to northern Italy or into the Balkans. The Elbe led to highlands and mountains rich in ore and legend. The Oder formed the eastern border, ruled and heavily colonized by Germans, although in the more remote villages and forest hamlets Poles and Slavs still spoke their native language and probably worshipped the old gods.

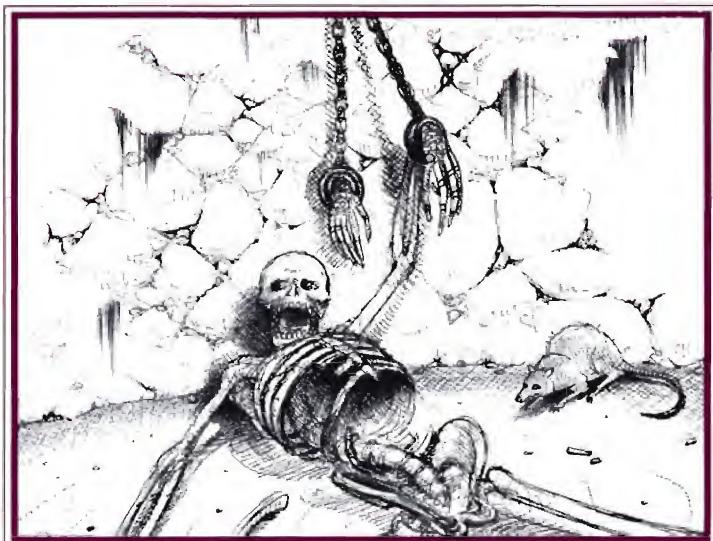


# LIFE IN THE HOLY ROMAN EMPIRE

## Imperial Politics

The extraordinary chaos and violence of 15th Century Germany was rooted in its peculiar political structure. In an age where all surrounding kingdoms were dynasties that passed from father to son, the German King and Emperor (he was always the same man) was elected by seven powerful noblemen: the Archbishops of Mainz, Trier and Köln (Cologne), the Count Palatine of the Rhine, the Duke of Saxony, the Margrave of Brandenburg, and the King of Bohemia.

This system insured that the Emperor was weak while the large noble families remained strong. To get elected, would-be Emperors gave money and lands to the electors in exchange for their support (i.e., buying their vote). Once elected, Emperors continued to spend money and lands, in an attempt to get their sons elected after them, ultimately hoping to create a family dynasty, such as that enjoyed by the kings of France, Spain or England.



For example, in 1439 Emperor Albert II died. In the next year his nephew, Frederick of Habsburg, was crowned King in Aachen and given custody of Albert's just-born son, Ladislas. However, not until 1452 did Frederick go to Rome for coronation as Emperor, and then only because a friendly Pope helped pay for the trip! For most of his reign Frederick III ruled from his Styrian (south Austrian) lands, enduring various indignities and setbacks from the nobles while he quietly, cautiously but competently ruled the family realm. In the 1470s he married his son, Maximilian, to the daughter of the Duke of Burgundy, the single richest prince in Europe. The Duke hoped to use his wealth to buy the title of King from Frederick. This in turn would lead to becoming the next Emperor. However, the Duke was killed in battle against the Swiss in 1477, allowing the Habsburgs to inherit his wealth instead. This allowed Frederick to get his son elected co-Emperor in 1486, a major step on the road to establishing the Habsburg dynasty that would ultimately dominate most of Europe in the 1500s.

What this means is that in the 1400s, the Emperor was poor and frequently powerless, carefully husbanding resources for future generations. Various "princes" were the real powers within the Empire. Some were rich and powerful nobles or prelates, controlling wide lands. Others were smaller, sometimes no more than a tiny castle and a few villages. Some families used family money to purchase from the Pope a position of abbot, bishop or archbishop, which gave the son control of all the lands and income attached to that church office. These positions could be quite important: some bishops or archbishops were fully equal to a margrave or duke. The archbishops of Mainz, Trier and Köln were among the richest in Europe, hence their position as electors. The Papacy, poor and/or divided, was

Digestion



quite happy with this arrangement. Episcopal offices could not be inherited, and were therefore available for resale whenever the current occupant died.

Noble families acquired land by intermarriage, gifts (including those from would-be Emperors), and conquest. They lost lands because fathers persisted in giving each of their sons a certain part of the family lands. This frequently caused bloody feuds between the sons. Family branches at war were especially frequent in this century. The English word "feud" is derived from "fehde," a German word meaning "private war."

To the casual observer, it seems that every major noble house in Germany was either fighting itself or its neighbors sometime during this century. Actually, the division and recombination of noble lands had gone on for centuries. By 1400 Greater Germany was a patchwork of divisions, with many nobles owning lands in dozens of scattered locations.

Each noble with sufficient military power could promulgate his own laws. The only higher court was the Emperor,

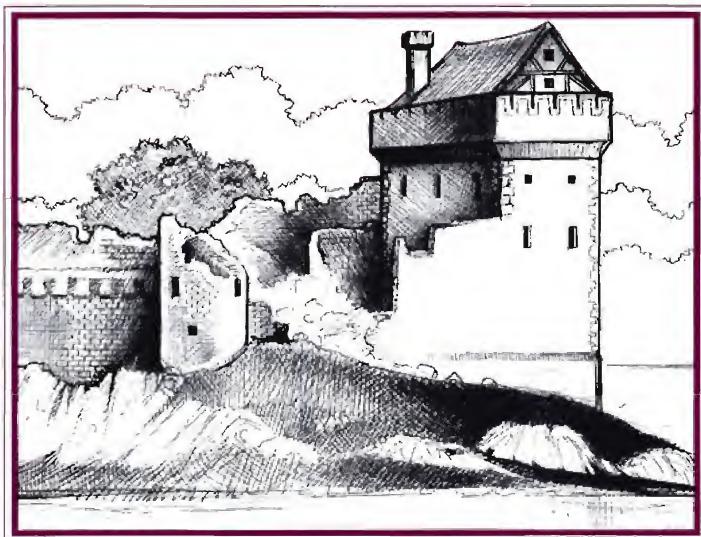
and *he* was rarely available! This meant that criminals only needed to elude the local pursuit and slip into a neighboring principality to avoid justice. In some cases, the noble himself was a robber. With a band of mercenary soldiers, he could tax or plunder anyone who passed near his land. These "raubritter" (robber knights) were the bane of Germany.

On a larger scale, Germany had various wars during this period. The most significant struggle was between the Teutonic Knights and the Kingdom of Poland, the most memorable the Hussite Wars.

The Order of Teutonic Knights, based in Marienberg and stretching along the Baltic coast into modern Russia, was an independent but waning power (the "Ordensstadt"). In 1410 a Polish-Lithuanian army crushed the Teutonic army at Grunwald-Tannenberg. For the remainder of the century the Poles slowly recaptured land from the Teutonic Knights, as well as expanding their eastern borders into the Russian city-states. Meanwhile a virtual plethora of Polish princesses married into the highest families of the Holy Roman Empire. This helped insure that Imperial forces would ignore the gradual dismemberment of the Ordensstadt, as long as the Poles weren't too greedy.

The other great conflict occurred in Bohemia, a fertile basin surrounded by mountains. Bohemia is a unique area in the Empire. Originally Czech-speaking, its rich mines and the great city of Prag (Prague) insured strong German interest. The religiously-inspired Hussite rebellions of the 1420s attracted a virtual crusade of German knights, led by the Emperor himself at times. The Hussites not only sought religious reform, but Czech cultural freedom from German domination. Unfortunately, the Hussite movement eventually fragmented, began fighting itself, and was ultimately crushed by Imperial forces.

In the north, the Hanseatic League was an association of cities that promoted and protected their trade. Although generally mercantile, the Hansa did organize and fight wars, with each city contributing troops or mercenaries. Like the Teutonic Knights, the Hansa was a declining power. It had made unwise choices in prosecuting trade wars with the



Scandinavians and Dutch. Their monopolies were crumbling, making the League a power more in name than in fact.

Many of the larger cities in Germany were “Imperial Free Cities” (see “The Cities of the Empire,” below, for details). Such places were effectively independent of all outsiders. The city citizens, embodied by the current city council (the “Rat of the Reichstädte”), ran their own affairs as they pleased, establishing all laws and rules.

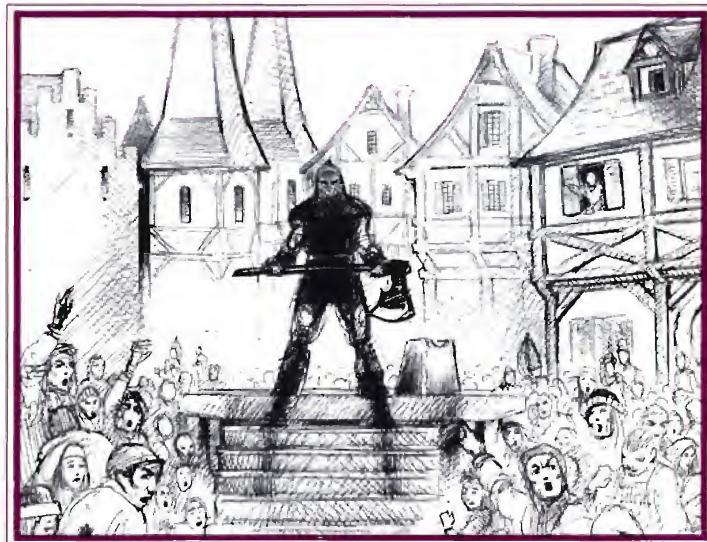
**POLITICS & ADVENTURING:** The existence of feuds and warfare is a major consideration when travelling. You run the risk of encountering military patrols, who generally assume that anyone not enrolled in their army must be the enemy! In addition, it is difficult to enter a place preparing for war, and almost impossible to get into or out of a place currently under siege.

The political landscape may also affect your reception in places. Noble houses sometimes ruled multiple cities. Your reputation in one of these cities may influence your reputation in the others. Of course, if you are hated by one house, the enemy of that house may welcome your presence.

The Imperial Free Cities are virtually independent states within their walls. Many of the richest cities in the land hold this status. Here your reputation is unique and the possibilities are limitless.

## Religion

The Church of medieval Europe was quite different from the modern Catholic Church. By the 1400s, the Church was a decadent institution so badly in need of reform that priests, monks, and sometimes even Popes attempted to make changes. The Church sold everything from indulgences to archbishoprics. Clerics from simple country priests to the Pope himself routinely had mistresses. Excommunications were invoked and revoked to suit immediate political ends. In rural parishes some priests couldn’t even read Latin, making it impossible for them to say the mass correctly. Of course, nobody else in the parish understood Latin, so superstition and old folk ways often continued under a thin



veil of Christianity. Many were aware how easily this allowed heresies to grow.

To many people the Church was an awesome institution, controlled by men of great wealth and power who used a “secret” language (Latin) and commanded all sorts of daunting powers, including miraculous aid, powerful relics, and terrifying excommunication to eternal hell. Degrees of religious belief might vary, but nobody sneered at a noble archbishop leading a mercenary army! Some took heart in the mendicant (travelling) friars and preachers, whose charismatic teachings ranged from inquisitorial witch-hunts to hints that the final reckoning was at hand. Of course, some were no more than freeloaders, threatening hell and damnation to anyone who didn’t provide them with food, drink, and a soft bed!

Distillation





**RELIGION AND ADVENTURING:** For an adventurer, the miraculous aspects of the 15th Century church are very useful. This includes both prayers for saintly miracles, and the power of various relics.

Cathedrals, churches, and sometimes monasteries are useful places to add virtue or regain divine favor (DF), so that characters depleted by asking for saintly aid can “recharge” and try again. Others prefer simply staying at an inn or in camp and praying to regain DF.

Useful relics can be gained by a judicious barter

of services. Furthermore, few churchmen are actively corrupt or evil; most are just pragmatic. They might offer various forms of religious aid, if you give them something in return.

You should be wary of clerics met on the road, in the remote countryside, or small hamlets. Some are genuine, but the world is also full of freeloaders, scoundrels, and worse.

## ❖ Society ❖

**ECONOMIES:** In earlier centuries, land was wealth. Feudal nobles owned the land, which included the peasant families that worked it. Land was passed to sons and daughters, with holdings subdivided by death, then recombined by marriage. Not even wars permanently changed the tradition of family land. Military victors usually sought to eliminate the enemy’s sons and marry their daughters, to give them “permanent” title to lands currently occupied by their army.

In the late Middle Ages merchants and mercantile pursuits were an important part of Europe’s economic fabric. Traditionally, profit from buying and selling, without put-

ting any personal labor into the product, was considered unworthy. Interest on loans (usury) was technically illegal by church law. However, the weakness of the Church and fraying morality allowed these proscriptions to lapse. Merchants and bankers eagerly entered the financial arena, and by the 1400s were rich enough to finance world-wide trading expeditions. In earlier ages the non-Christian Jews had served as bankers and merchants. Now they were unnecessary, which led to many tragic pogroms that drove them from the cities, or sometimes the entire realm.

When industry and trade returned to Europe, money and wealth became more important than land. Not unlike today, people started measuring status by disposable wealth. Expensive clothing, palatial residences and costly recreations all displayed one’s place in society.

Minor nobles and knights, living in rural castles and ruling a few hamlets, were often poorer than modest merchants or guildsmen in a neighboring city. Property, income and sales taxes were unknown, leaving many nobles with nothing more than traditional land rents established centuries earlier. Some were virtually forced to become “raubritter” (robber knights) just to survive. Greater nobles consumed money by the wagon-load to maintain their status and finance military ventures (or defenses against venturesome neighbors). To get money, they frequently sold land for big, long-term cash payments, or let wealthy towns and cities buy various degrees of independence.

**MONEY:** Various kingdoms and principalities minted their own coins with varying amounts of precious metals. The florins, groschen and pfenniges in *Darklands* are common denominations, widely used in the Empire. Florins are very valuable gold coins, usually carried only by noblemen, rich merchants, and other wealthy persons. Groschen are larger silver coins, carried by all but the poorest citizens. Pfenniges are small change, valued by only the poverty-stricken. A popular nickname for the gold florin was “Rhinegulden” (Rhine gold), as many gold florins were minted in the wealthy Rhine cities.

The actual value of coins depended on the mint and the date minted. Various principalities issued various types of coins, including half-groschen, schillings, wittens, etc. Germany had some of the richest silver mines in Europe, and new mining techniques available in the 1400s allowed the reopening of many old, abandoned works.

On the other hand, princes with minting rights frequently debased their coinage by making coins with a lower percentage of precious metal, to "stretch" their money further. The complexities of multiple and frequently debased coins are ignored in *Darklands*. Instead you can enjoy what medieval man longed for: a stable, recognizable coinage that always has the same value everywhere.

**POPULATION:** In the winter of 1347-48 the bubonic plague (the "Black Death") struck Europe. For the remainder of the century, outbreaks repeatedly decimated populations in various areas. By the middle of the 1400s, between one-third and one-half the population had disappeared. Unoccupied farmland reverted to its wild state, usually forests. There was a shortage of labor everywhere. This destroyed the old feudal system where peasants were "tied" to the land. After the plague, an unhappy family could abandon their farm, and join the many refugees, pilgrims, and other victims of chaos in the countryside. From there they could find a new and better occupation in a labor-hungry town or city, or at least find a nicer nobleman in need of farmers!

Some of these refugees joined mercenary companies, who hired themselves out to feuding nobles. German mercenary companies were plentiful. They were so experienced that virtually every neighboring state used them: the English in their civil wars, the Duke of Burgundy in his wars of expansion, and the Italian city-states in their perpetual conflicts.

Throughout most of the 15th Century, opportunities for mobility and social change were better than previous or future times. Furthermore, the rise of a monied economy, where wealth (not land) bought success and power, allowed venturesome people the prospect of great gains. In fact, so many newly rich families purchased titles of nobility that



heraldic insignia underwent a vast expansion and change, to accommodate all the newly noble families.

Needless to say, this wild and changing time is a perfect setting for adventure, a place where one can easily find dangerous tasks, large rewards and everlasting fame.

**VIOLENCE:** In a world of social change, weak laws, and constant warfare, it is no surprise that towns, cities and monasteries built or improved their fortifications to protect the inhabitants. A standing force of guardsmen existed primarily to defend the walls, and secondarily to keep the peace within. Initially recruited from the citizenry, the guard was frequently supplemented by mercenaries.

Outside the walls, violence was commonplace and justice rare. The leader of each village or hamlet (typically a "schulz")

Fermentation



was a warrior as well as an administrator. His skill and leadership helped assure survival against bandits and wild animals. Only rarely could a schulz rely on his titular noble overlord for aid. All too often the overlord was just a distant source of taxation and trouble.

Travelling merchants hired guards to protect their goods and lives. Even friars and pilgrims frequently travelled with weapons to defend themselves.

**EDUCATION:** Despite the difficulties of the age, the 15th Century was also the beginning of the Renaissance. Knowledge and learning were no longer just the province of priests and monks. Universities existed. Scions of wealthy noblemen or merchants were tutored by various teachers, not just monks and priests. Johannes Gutenberg began printing books in the 1440s. Even the wildest ideas, when committed to print, seemed credible. One of the “best-sellers” in this era was the *Malleus Malificarum*, a handbook on the evils of witchcraft, how to identify them, and how to deal with them.

Education did not instantly confer wealth or position. However, intelligent men and women began trying to expand their knowledge, experiment and learn. For example, while alchemists in previous centuries generally tried to invoke and bind demons or devils, alchemists in the 15th Century were at least as interested in identifying pure elements and achieving chemical changes. Their hope of transforming lead to gold simply indicates the amount of knowledge they still lacked.

Latin remained the primary written language of Europe. However, for the first time documents were also written, and even printed, in local everyday languages. This also contributed to the decline of the Church, in this case as the repository of human knowledge and wisdom.

**THE CLOCK:** The classic “monastic clock” of eight hours, or bells, was the traditional method of timekeeping in this era. The actual length of each monastic hour varied with the amount of daylight in each day, since the hours were timed to the sun’s position, rather than an absolute measure. New mechanical clocks were just appearing in the richer

towns and cities, mainly on public buildings. Clock mechanisms were still cumbersome and complex, using weights and counter-weights. Coiled spring clock mechanisms were not invented until the next century.

**THE CALENDAR:** For simplicity, in *Darklands* all holidays occur on the same date each year, and there are no leap years. In reality, holiday dates were a difficult and complex art, since medieval Europe used the Julian Calendar, created in 46 BC by Julius Caesar. Although this calendar included leap years, it produced an error of one day every 128 years, resulting in considerable confusion by the 1400s. This problem was not corrected until the 1580s, when Pope Gregory sponsored adjustments still in use today.

Popular holidays in Germany during this era include the Christian celebrations of Easter (April 15th) and Christmas (December 25th), plus Shrovetide (February 11th), Maidult (May 1st) and Michaelmas (September 9th). Of these, Shrovetide was the largest. Other well-known dates during the year include the Vernal Equinox (March 21st), Holy Thursday (April 12th), Ascension (May 26th), Corpus Christi (June 11th), Midsummer Eve (June 21st), the Autumnal Equinox (September 22nd), All Hallow’s Eve (October 30th), and among certain heretics the Last Sabbath (December 26th).

## ❖ The Cities of the Empire ❖

Germany had a plethora of small cities. The largest, Cologne (Köln in German), had about 30,000 people (6,000 to 7,000 families) by the end of the century. This is similar to London and somewhat smaller than Paris, but vastly smaller than the 100,000 of Naples (in southern Italy), not to mention Constantinople or the great cities of Asia. For this reason, some historians refer to German cities as “towns.”

The Imperial Free City was an institution unique to the Empire. Normally cities were subject to whatever nobleman ruled those lands. But in the Empire, certain cities became direct subjects of the Emperor (which, of course, changed whenever a new Emperor was elected). Typically cities

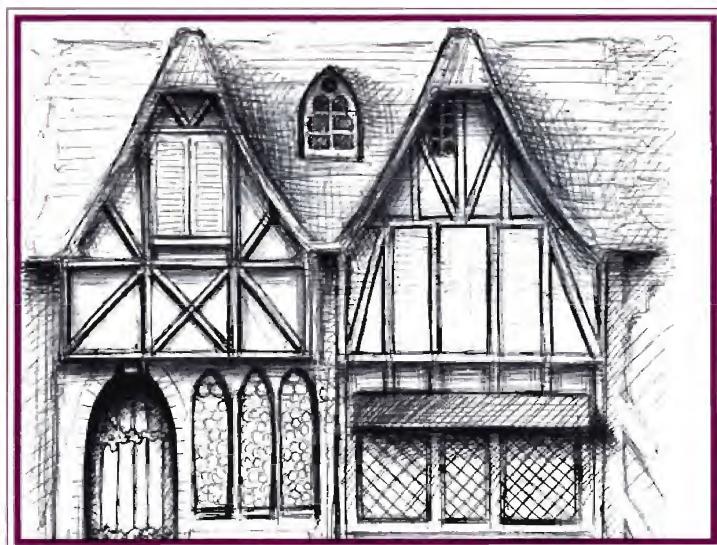
"bought" this status by giving both the former noble and the emperor large sums of money. Often the rich citizens of a city saved and waited for the right moment, when the noble or the Emperor desperately needed funds for some war or ceremony.

Once free, a city formed its own council (or "Rat") which selected a few men to run the city's day-to-day affairs. Important laws, decisions about foreign policy, etc., were made by the Rat as a whole. The Rat generally consisted of the wealthy families who financed the city's freedom. The laws and rules naturally favored their interests. In future generations, as family fortunes rose and fell, political problems could result when new, rich families were denied participation in city government. Many cities obtained their freedom in the late 1200s or 1300s, so by the 1400s they were ripe for political revolts.

German cities were extremely self-protective. Most built walls during this period, had a city guard, and frequently prepared for war or were actively at war. More than once nobles attempted to retake a free city on some pretext. A few even succeeded. For example, until 1462 Mainz was effectively independent from its titular ruler, the archbishop. Then laxness among the city guard allowed the Archbishop of Mainz, Adolf of Nassau, to sneak his troops into the city. After ten hours of confused street-fighting he captured "his" city and thenceforth ruled it with an iron fist.

Free or not, the cities of Germany were the center of its industry and trade. Even at this early date, Germany already had a reputation for fine craftsmanship, good workmanship, and careful attention to detail. German arms, armor, and mechanical devices were prized everywhere. Even today, internationally renowned museums value an early astrolabe or gold drinking cup made in a late-medieval German city, such as Nuremberg (Nürnberg), Salzburg, or Leipzig.

**CITIES & ADVENTURING:** In cities you can find almost anything for a price. Larger cities usually have greater selection and higher quality. In addition, not every city includes every aspect of urban life. For example, some cities have a swordsmith's guild, a cathedral, and/or a slum, while others do not.

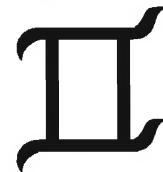


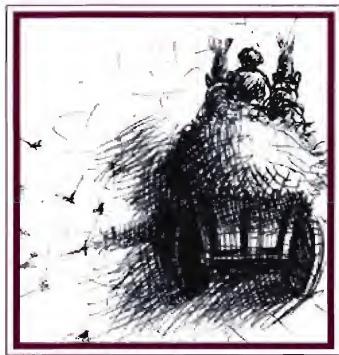
The largest cities of Germany include (in order of size) Köln, Lübeck, Hamburg, Danzig, Strassburg, Nürnberg and Ulm. Others nearly that size include Bremen, Leipzig, Dresden, Mainz, Trier, Worms, Regensburg, Augsburg, München, Prag and Wien (Vienna).

All cities have a seat of government, either in the Council Hall (usually termed the "Rat" or "Stadthaus") or a fortress. Some cities include a fortress or barracks for self-protection, in addition to the Council Hall.

Every city has a central square where notices are posted, and a marketplace where goods are commonly bought and sold. This marketplace sometimes includes offices of the Fugger or Medici banks, or even a new concept developed by the Fuggers: the Leihhaus (a

Fixation





pawnshop). Marketplaces frequently include a pharmacist, who might have various alchemical materials.

Every city has its parish church, representative of the many in the city. Cathedrals are frequent, although most are still unfinished. Cathedrals frequently have patron saints and/or relics. Virtually every city has a monastery of some sort. Praemonstrater

monasteries are especially common in the west and Freisland (the North Sea coast). Their specialty is providing well-trained clerical staffs to churches and cathedrals. For the adventurer, monastic libraries are excellent sources of religious knowledge.

Industry and crafts are ostensibly regulated in cities by the guilds. The guilds control all work in a specific field, insuring high quality and requiring all members to charge a "fair" price. Useful guilds include swordsmiths (for hand-to-hand and thrown weaponry), bowyers and gunsmiths (for missile weapons), armorers (for metal armor), clothmakers (for non-metal armor), and artisans (for miscellaneous items and tools). Smaller cities and various rural hamlets just have a blacksmith, who can fashion certain types of weapons or armor, usually of lesser quality.

Also in the guild district you may find alchemists and/or physicians. Alchemists may be willing to sell or trade knowledge and materials, while physicians can be helpful in curing physical ailments.

Virtually every city has inns of some sort, a place for travellers. Every city has an annual fair. This was a time of celebration, sometimes linked to a trade fair. Naturally prices are higher during the fair. Shrovetide is the most common celebration.

A few cities have universities, centers of intellectual activity sponsored by the state, rather than the church. For an

adventurer, these are excellent sources of information about alchemy and various saints. University cities include Rostock, Köln, Wittenberg, Erfurt, Leipzig, Freiberg, Freiberg-im-Breisgau, Würzburg, Prag, Basel, Wien, Pressburg and Heidelberg. Universities founded late in the 1400s are not included.

## Ordinary Life

Over three dozen common occupations are available to potential adventurers. These allow adventurers to develop skills and abilities. Theoretically, in the Middle Ages birth determined allowable occupations. However, after the Black Death, Europe was underpopulated. People could and did travel about, dropping their old life and making a new one. When this is combined with the growing importance of wealth (rather than land-holding), considerable social mobility results.

Medieval society was also quite conscious of gender. Women had a carefully defined role, subservient to the male. Women were supposed to create and nurture families at home; older single women or working women were considered undesirable and possibly unsavory. Overall, the female sex was seen by the Church as more dangerous and potentially sinful than man.

Women, of course, adopted their own solutions to this problem. Many cross-dressed as males, disguising their "true" nature. It is impossible to estimate how common this was. For example, as late as 1700, the finest duellist and best secret agent in Europe was the Duke d'Eon. To this day nobody is sure whether "he" was a man or woman, since the Duke dressed convincingly for both roles!

A few of the boldest, most charismatic women ignored social convention entirely, making their own rules. Joan of Arc is one example. She was a charismatic military figure-head for French forces fighting the English in the later stages of the "Hundred Years War" during this period. Her death and martyrdom occurred after she fell into English hands (in 1430).

In either case, and in keeping with a more modern sentiment about gender, women are allowed virtually equal opportunities in *Darklands*. Female character's graphics are

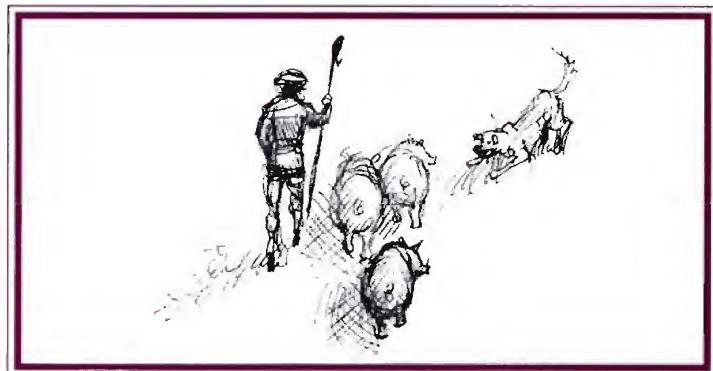
included in *Darklands*, but feel free to use a “male” appearance for female characters who are cross-dressing.

The only exception to this equality is in religion. Certain clerical occupations are only available to males. However, this is balanced by various saints who provide greater benefits to women.

**MILITARY OCCUPATIONS:** Most soldiers begin as a RECRUIT in a mercenary company or nobleman’s army. After receiving training in basic weapons and various specialities, they are considered a useful SOLDIER, where once again their concern is with weapons. VETERANS have mastered the military life. They can pursue non-military interests, or strive for excellence in a specific weapon. The last step is becoming CAPTAIN of one’s own mercenary company or city guard. Here one develops leadership and human-management skills.

**ARISTOCRATIC OCCUPATIONS:** For most, the easiest entry to the aristocracy is becoming a COURTIER in one of the great courts of the Empire, perhaps even that of the Emperor himself. Courtiers become adept at negotiation, urban living, and clerical matters, but have only limited opportunities for weapons practice. For a person of noble birth, the alternate route is inheritance — as a NOBLE HEIR. This provides a well-rounded range of opportunities, depending upon one’s interests. KNIGHTS are invariably noblemen, fighting and often leading contingents in an army. Successful captains or high clerics can acquire patents of nobility and become knights. The pinnacle of aristocratic success is the MANORIAL LORD, with personal lands. These leaders have a wide range of experience, especially in leadership and management.

**CLERICAL OCCUPATIONS:** Noble or wealthy families could and did buy their sons a PRIESTHOOD. This is also open to persons with significant intellectual training (such as clerks, professors, etc.) or social status (such as nobles, village leaders, etc.). Otherwise, the usual entry into the Church is through a monastery, where one begins as a NOVICE MONK or NOVICE NUN. A few years as a novice normally results in acceptance as a member MONK or NUN in the order. Then one can aspire to being a PRIEST (if male), ABBOT or ABBESS. The



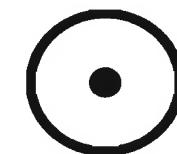
final step possible is an appointment as BISHOP. The Church prohibits women from becoming Priests or Bishops.

In addition to the traditional monastic orders, there are also new, mendicant orders. These FRIARS travel the world, begging for sustenance and helping the needy wherever they find them. An even more ancient tradition is the HERMIT, who finds some private, lonely place to contemplate privately the meaning of religion and virtue.

Monasteries also allow OBLATES, lay students taught alongside the monks. Unlike novices or monks, oblates make no commitment to a monastic life. In effect, an oblate is like a modern student, with the monastery serving as a private school. Historically, many monasteries received a stipend from families who sent sons or daughters to be oblates.

**MERCANTILE OCCUPATIONS:** Travelling PEDDLERS are the simplest of merchants, selling small simple items to rural peasants and farmers, then carrying simple country crafts back into the city, where they can trade them for more small items. LOCAL TRADERS have somewhat greater substance, with enough capital to take wagon-loads of goods between a city and the surrounding country-

Gold





side. Much to the dismay of the guilds, these traders often undercut the guild system by engaging peasant wives and other rural labor to make cheap copies of guild products, especially clothing. These “cottage industries” helped fuel northern Europe’s economic development in the latter Middle Ages.

#### TRAVELLING MERCHANTS

MERCHANTS are the national and international traders who link European cities together into a larger economic network, and who reach out to the rest of the world. Marco Polo was one such merchant. Considerable wealth is needed as capital, but the rewards are commensurate with the investment and the risk. The most successful become MERCHANT-PROPRIETORS, wealthy managers of an international business. These managers stay at home, while subordinates take risks and travel for them.

CRAFTSMEN: Medieval Europe had no factories and no production lines. All goods were hand-crafted. In cities craftsmen specializing in a certain sphere quickly learned to form guilds. Originally similar to labor unions, guilds soon became the sellers as well as creators of their goods. Guilds established rules for both prices and quality. In a guild, a person starts as an APPRENTICE CRAFTSMAN to gain initial training and experience, then graduates to JOURNEYMAN CRAFTSMAN. After a suitable period, the most skillful become MASTER CRAFTSMEN and leaders of the guild.

THE INTELLIGENTSIA: In addition to monastic education as an oblate, monk or nun, one can be a STUDENT at a university, where literacy, Latin and clear thinking are the main topics, along with a certain amount of religious background. This opens the door to various advanced professions. The most common is that of CLERK, who functions as scribe and bookkeeper for noblemen, businessmen, or guilds. Se-

nior clerks frequently act as middle managers, especially in large businesses or noble courts.

Instead of clerking, the intellectually inclined could become PROFESSORS and teach at universities, or gain an equivalent, resident position in the court of a powerful nobleman. Specialists in medicine and the human body might become PHYSICIANS and treat the sick.

Finally, one can become an ALCHEMIST. With experience, alchemists ascend to MASTER ALCHEMIST. Both of these pursuits confer knowledge of alchemical formulas, provide simple components, and a starting Philosopher’s Stone.

COMMONERS AND THE COUNTRY: Those without the ability or inclination to pursue more complex pursuits can always work as a common LABORER in a city or town. Merchants, guilds, and large households always need strong backs and willing hands for many tasks.

The countryside is composed of small farming hamlets and villages. Homes might be spread out among the farmed plots, or grouped together in the center for protection. Officially, the residents are PEASANTS, tied to the land and prohibited from leaving without the landowner’s permission. In fact, unhappy peasants can and do flee to the independent cities, where residence for a year and a day gives freedom. In many larger villages, especially those with a neighboring noble manor, some residents are HUNTERS, usually for the lord. They specialized in taking game from uncultivated land. Unlike England, in Germany most woods are Imperial property or owned by nobody, making hunting available to everyone, commoners as well as noblemen.

UNDERWORLD AND UNDERCLASS: Most urban criminals are THIEVES, specialists in robbing people or dwellings. A few of the brightest and best-talking are SWINDLERS, who outwit their victims in various ways. In the countryside, all manner of fugitives hide in the forests, becoming BANDITS who prey on passing travellers, or sometimes terrorize small hamlets.

The most humble of all the underclass is the VAGABOND, the penniless wanderer without family or residence, barely surviving from day to day. Any variety of disaster creates

these miserable creatures. Sometimes their struggles and privations provide an inner strength (not to mention pragmatic experience) that helps in later life.

**THE LIFE OF ADVENTURE:** In all cases, it is presumed that some “sea change” in life caused the person to start adventuring. Nobles or clerics might be suddenly dispossessed by war or family misfortune, great merchants might have their fortune ruined, and any manner of disaster, or simple wanderlust, might cause a person to abandon the “easy” life and seek truth, justice for all, and everlasting fame.

**ADVICE FOR ADVENTURERS:** In childhood, the major decision is whether to favor certain attributes (making the character truly outstanding in those), or to divide EPs evenly. Beware of short-changing strength and endurance, since such characters die quickly. Intelligence is critically important to would-be alchemists. Somebody will need to be the leader, and he or she should have superior charisma (and a good “Speak Common” skill). Also consider having a secondary “battle leader” with good perception and superlative fighting attributes, who takes over from the “meet and greet leader” at appropriate times.

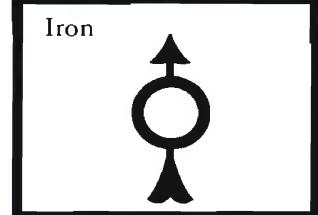
The first five years of adult life are the most important. Characters receive a great deal of experience, allowing them to learn a lot quickly. The next five years are also important, although the experience gained isn’t quite so large. After that experience varies solely with the profession selected. Remember that many professions may adjust attributes as well as offer opportunities for skill increase. If you are depending on a certain attribute, avoid professions that might reduce it!

After age 30, aging begins to reduce attributes. Endurance, strength and agility suffer first, then perception and charisma, and finally intelligence. The amount of loss gradually increases, especially from age 45 onward. Old warriors may have superior skills, but are very brittle, with less endurance and strength than younger men and women. Remember also that while adventuring can increase your skills, there’s almost no way to permanently improve attributes. Therefore, a younger, stronger, but less experi-



enced character has long-term advantages, although you must suffer with his or her poor skills during early adventures. Fortunately the inexperienced learn quickly (or die trying).

The last occupation of a character before adventuring determines his or her starting equipment. Therefore, certain occupations are very useful immediately before adventuring. One of the most popular is a military pursuit, since the character ends up with weapons and armor. Knights, of course, have the best equipment, followed by Veterans, Captains, Manorial Lords and Soldiers, in that order.



## GERMANIC ENCOUNTERS

### A Land of Myth and Legend

Germany is a land rich in folk stories and fairy tales. Some can be traced to the pre-Christian age where barbarian Franks worshipped northern gods like Odin and Loki. The Dark Ages spawned the Siegfried myth: an invincible dragon-slaying hero doomed by an ancient curse he carelessly ignored. Many of the fairy tales collected by the 19th Century brothers Grimm come from the Middle Ages. Their random violence, capricious events, and conflicts between material wealth and proper social station echo popular concerns of the late medieval and early modern eras (1400 to 1700).

**GEOGRAPHY:** The Greater Germany of *Darklands* has a wide variety of geography. Except for the geest (heath) along the North Sea coast, the entire area was originally dense forest. Open land only exists because man cleared the forest



for farming. Typically, the lowlands and flatlands were cleared first, while the hills and mountains remained tree-covered, a darkly ominous presence that overlooks fertile valleys.

In Germany skies are overcast more than clear, with frequent storms from the North Sea. The colder air causes ground fogs that cloak valleys and lowlands with a white blanket. Winters are cold and snowy. Steep roofs are preferred, so heavy snow slides off, rather than collapsing the building.

The geest of Friesland, peopled by the Wends, is much like the heath and moors of Scotland or Nova Scotia. The land is very flat, tabling slowly into the North Sea. The coastline is a huge wetland with large tidal marshes that disappear beneath the sea during high tide. Cold, biting winds off the North Sea discourage trees, so the ground cover is mostly grass and brush.

Conversely, along the Baltic coast and to the east of the Oder, the land is flat but heavily forested. The original Slavic peoples, now heavily mixed with German colonists, are still sparse. Many future centuries will pass before this region becomes known as "the North German plain." In this age the brooding Eastern forests evoke visions of barbaric savages raiding Christian farmsteads, even if the reality is more likely to be a troop of Polish lancers charging battered, doomed, but still defiant Teutonic Knights.

Central Germany, between the Rhine and the Elbe, south of the geest and north of the Danube, is a fertile land dominated by the Thuringian Wald (forest) and the Harz. Both are low mountains covered with dense forest. The Harz is more rugged, with precipitous ravines and various places of evil repute, including Brocken, a high, frequently clouded, lightning-blasted mountaintop, and the Hexentanzplatz ("the place where the witches dance"). The Harz is also a fine mining site. However, some of the richest mines in Central Germany are along the slopes of the Erzgebirge (literally "the ore mountains") near Freiburg and Dresden.



The Rhine River originates in Switzerland, in the southwest corner of Greater Germany. As it flows northward to the sea, most of its length passes through heavily forested mountains and ridges. Eventually, between Duisberg and Wesel, its delta to the North Sea becomes a welter of waterways through Holland and Belgium. Although the Rhineland are frequently rugged, there are more than enough fertile valleys and small plains to sustain a large population, including its many ancient cities.

The Danube originates in the Black Forest, near the start of the Rhine, but flows eastward toward Hungary and the Balkans. The south bank is a great watershed of plains and marshes, formed by rivers flowing from the Alps north into the Danube. This fertile plain is the heartland of Bavaria, with the trading cities of Ulm and Regensburg, the banking center of Augsburg, and somewhat to the north the famous craftsmen of Nürnberg.

South of this, the Alps themselves form a mighty rampart guarding the heartland of Switzerland and the northern Italian plains. Its passes are only open in summer. The jutting, ice-covered spires still inspire awe today. Medieval man imagined all manner of places and things among the inaccessible heights.

North of the middle Danube is the great basin of Bohemia, formed ages ago by a giant meteor. Its capital is Prag (Prague), but in this century it is most famous for silver mines and religious fanaticism: the Hussites, followers of Huss and Ziska. Although Germanic in this age, the common people

have slavic roots; many speak Czech. To Germans, Bohemia is a slightly strange, uncertain place where one must expect the unexpected.

## Ordinary Humanity

**FELLOW TRAVELLERS:** When travelling the roads and countryside of Germany, there are many common sights. Travelling merchants with wagons and guards are commonplace. Due to the bandits and tolls, many of these merchants take uncommon or unexpected routes, preferring natural hazards to human ones. Merchants are naturally nervous about the intentions of anyone they meet.

Another common sight is the travelling friar. Such encounters are to be dreaded, since some friars use religious sentiment and the hint of eternal damnation to virtually extort almost anything from anybody, especially drink, money and food (roughly in that order!).

In war-torn lands, military scouts or entire armies are a constant danger. Even worse is the risk of travelling into lands under feud, where each side regards all others as potential enemies. During a feud ambushes, raids, and simple murder are commonplace.

A variety of other people also risk the rigors and danger of travel, from simple vagabonds and refugees to boldly bedecked noble parties going to or from some tournament.

**HUNTING:** Germany is covered with dense forests, some of them untouched by human habitation, while others grow on farmland left vacant after the Black Death. Unlike other realms, nobles have few legal claims on the forests, which allows more hunting by commoners. However, nobles sometimes claim any and all accessible land, regardless of their legal rights, and might take umbrage at "poachers." The best way to avoid such entanglements is to camp in remote areas.

**BANDITS & RAUBRITTER:** An extremely common danger to

Lead





travellers is bandits. The hills, mountains and forests of Germany provide innumerable lurking places for human scum. Bandits are frequently criminals banished or exiled from more lawful cities and manors. Whenever a judge decided to banish a criminal (rather than mutilate or kill him), that criminal became a problem elsewhere. Local jails and dungeons are short-term “holding pens” until trials. Only prisoners held for ransom or political purposes might languish in dungeons for years.

There are no long-term prisons for criminals in this era. One is punished as necessary, then freed (if still living). Of course, some bandits have good reasons for their occupation. They might be dispossessed, struggling to live however they can. Many were unemployed or defeated mercenaries.

The worst of these bandits are the “raubritter,” or robber knights. A raubritter usually claims a small piece of territory, based on his possession of a fortress. Supported by his band of thugs, he extorts tolls of all sorts from anyone passing near. A famous Austrian raubritter on the Danube didn’t just stop

at extorting river tolls. He preferred to toss his victims from his clifftop overlooking the river, enjoying the screams as they plunged to the rocks below. In fact, in 15th Century Germany river tolls were so common and so costly that most merchants preferred overland travel, despite its slower speed and greater difficulty.

**THUGS AND THIEVES:** Within cities life is more peaceful. Many cities are self-governing, with citizens forming a council and/or serving in a urban militia that drilled each weekend on a square or green. In times of danger, the militia might be supplemented by a hired mercenary company. These two sources provide the troops at the gates and walls, as well as the nightwatch. Almost every city has a late-night curfew, after which it is illegal to be on the streets until dawn.

Most German cities are well-regulated, with clean streets and a peaceful population. However, many have slums, rundown areas inhabited by the poor and/or a criminal element. This is the most dangerous part of any city. The next most dangerous activity is trying to stay outdoors or in a ruined building, rather than spending money for a room at the inn. Thieves usually prey on the weak and defenseless; only rarely will they risk capture in the “better” parts of town.

Sometimes travellers find a city in the midst of upheaval. The citizens may be unhappy with the government, or vice versa. Political stresses often require a certain amount of violence, or threatened violence, before they are resolved. To this end, “thugs” hired by each party prowl the streets, looking for suspicious activity and punishing it. Urban politics is a dangerous and stressful occupation in such circumstances!

### Beasts and Monsters

In the 1400s Europeans had a fanciful and mythological view of the creatures inhabiting the world. Even the great naturalistic studies of the 1500s (Ambroise Paré and Konrad Gesner) still included human hermaphrodites, fur-covered women, children with dog’s legs, demons created by sorcerers, Arabian unicorns, etc. Only some of the more common possibilities and dangers are listed below. Always expect the unexpected.

**WOLF:** Packs of wild wolves are among the most common dangers to travellers in Germany. In fact, in times of famine, wolves were known to invade towns and villages, pulling down their victims in the middle of a street! The likelihood and determination of a wolf attack depends on their hunger. Since wolves attack for food, they only bring down what they need — frequently one person, rather than the entire party.

**BOAR:** Boars are common in medieval forests. If threatened, they will fight to the death, and their method of fighting is to make ferocious charges. Sometimes the only warning of an attack is the rustling of thickets as the boar hurtles toward you.

Once committed to a fight, boars continue to their dying breath. For example, impaling a boar with a normal spear doesn't stop it; the boar continues charging as the spear slides through its body, undeterred by an eventually mortal wound. This is why "boar spears" have a crossbar near the point. Furthermore, boars continue to attack until all their opponents are dead or have fled.

**BEAR:** Like boars, bears are unpredictably dangerous animals. When hungry they will scavenge human camps or settlements, and become angry if disturbed. Threatening a bear's cubs is a sure way to provoke a fight.

Bears are among the strongest of wild animals, formidable opponents in hand-to-hand fighting. However, they are also fairly intelligent. Painful wounds may demoralize them, and unlike boars they do not always fight to the death.

Bearskins have some modest value in most marketplaces.

**GIANT SPIDER:** There are spiders as large as big dogs that hunt for prey, including humans. Any prey they cannot immediately eat is killed, then bundled for later use. Giant spiders are fast and have poisonous fangs, but can be driven away unless starving. These creatures are frequently reported in forests, but there are tales of spiders found in mines, ruined buildings, and (once) inside a cathedral.

**TATZELWURM:** This large, vicious lizard has two legs and a long, whip-like tail. It is very agile, and is rumored to have a poisonous bite. It fights tenaciously for its territory,



which is usually in high alpine lands. The tatzelwurm easily climbs trees, and has been reported in the deep forests.

The tail of the tatzelwurm is reputed to have magical properties. Alchemists have not yet found a use for it, but the very rumors help enhance its value in the marketplace.

**WEREWOLF:** These are men who have given themselves to a devil, who gives them the power to transform from man to wolf, and back again, as they desire. Werewolves usually trick humans by appearing in human form, then transforming and killing their victim in an unguarded moment. The goals of a werewolf depend on the hungers and lusts that drive their human soul. Predictably, a person who gives his soul to a devil can have quite unpleasant desires!

In a famous case of the late 1500s "Stubbe Peter" terrorized the area around Coperadt and Bedbur in Germany. Peter was

Mercury



driven by unnatural lechery and lust for females, from small girls to attractive women. He would chase down a victim as a wolf, transform to a man and ravish her, then transform back to a wolf and kill her. He disliked most men, and killed his own son.

**SCHRAT:** This large, hairy, hulking creature of the woods is also known as the "wodewose." Roughly human-shaped, schrats are simple-minded, unable to speak, and frequently either angry or lustful (so much so that another nickname is "wild man"). Many have greenish hair, and are mistaken for small trees by some travellers. Others consider them deformed ogres. Little good can be expected from a schrat; if it cannot be avoided, it usually must be fought. Women should be especially careful around them, as they could be captured and defiled. However, the schrat's companion, the holzfrau, is very different.

**HOLZFRAU:** This large, hair-covered but humanoid female is also known as the "waldmännlein", "woodwife" or "faun." It is the normal mate to a schrat. Holzfraus are

intelligent, beautiful in their own peculiar way, and generally friendly, especially if regularly given offerings of food and tools. They are many cases of holzfrau kindness to lonely, lost humans in the woods.

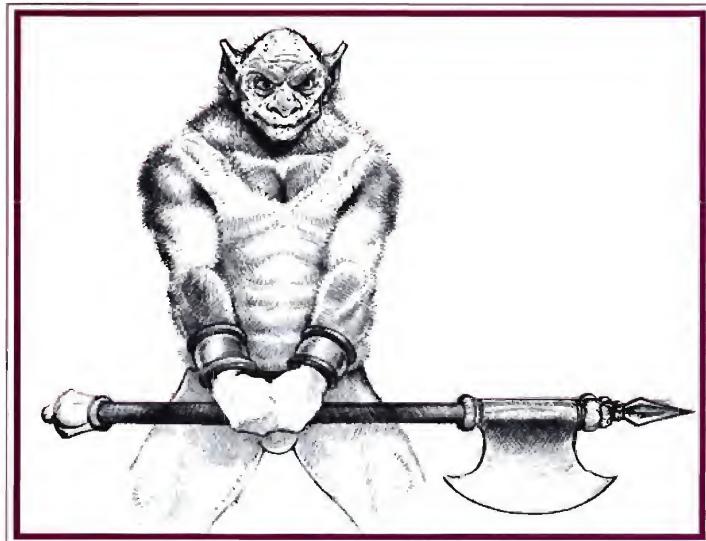
**OGRE:** These semi-human, large, misshapen, but powerful creatures are a continual danger to mankind. They hide in the deepest forests and most remote mountains, to avoid capture and death. Ogres are hunters. Their great favorite is the taste of human flesh. Falling into their power is almost invariably fatal. Fortunately, ogres are also stupid. More than one potential victim has literally talked his or her way out of the pot!

**KOBOLD:** These small, dark creatures live underground, usually within small cracks in the rock. Their thin bodies and spindly limbs let them move through apparently impassable areas. They are hostile to all who invade their realm, but are not especially brave or intelligent. They hate human miners, and frequently set traps, ruin ore veins, cause fires, and generally do their best to kill the human invaders. Fortunately, individual kobolds are weak fighters, with poor weapons and no armor beyond their leathery skin.

Sometimes kobolds are ruled by the far craftier dwarfs. Then the situation depends on the attitude of their dwarf ruler. When directed by dwarf cunning, kobolds can become very dangerous opponents.

**DWARF:** These semi-human creatures prefer to live underground, in mountains and/or caves. They are small, dark, and slightly twisted. Cunning and dangerous, they frequently rule a clan of kobolds and/or gnomes. Dwarfs consider humans a numerous but inferior race, mostly pests, but sometimes useful. Their gifts to humans are frequently double-edged, with both advantages and disadvantages. For example, the famous Ring of the Niebelungen, made by Albrecht the Dwarf from the cursed Rhinegold, caused the death of all who owned it, including the hero Siegfried.

Some dwarfs are reputed to be great sorcerers and magicians, which suggests they are in league with Satan. Presumably, therefore, they can command some of the same powers as witches and other satanic cults.





**GNOME:** These are creatures of the rock itself, elementals that embody the living spirit of the earth. Gnomes are not easily aroused, but some dwarfs and kobolds know the secret. Certainly humans do not, and do not really understand what motivates them. Many believe that gnomes are disturbed if humans tunnel into their homes.

Gnomes can cause tremors, cracks and quakes. They can also leave their home in the rock and fashion a body from loose rock and dirt. These incarnations are very dangerous but usually brief. Miners believe that unnatural cave-ins are actually gnomes briefly aroused by a kobold, dwarf, or perhaps some human transgression.

**VULCAN:** This is a creature of the deep underground, of the fiery depths where rock itself burns. Sometimes they are called “fire elementals,” but this implies too great a universality. Vulcans avoid the surface or air, preferring the depths of the earth. They may have existed before the fall of Satan; it is unclear whether they just happen to inhabit hell, or they actually are controlled by its ruler

Few humans have ever seen a vulcan, fewer still have survived the encounter. Nobody has any real understanding of them. The only consistent information is that they are very active in some mountains, sometimes leaping from mountaintops or migrating down a mountainside. Fortunately, these events are brief, after which the vulcans once again disappear underground.

**DRAGON:** The dragon is not a natural or living creature. Instead, the dragon is an embodiment of evil, waiting for the final battle of Armageddon (as predicted in Revelations). Then it will fight with the forces of the Antichrist. Dragons do not eat normally: the more they eat, the hungrier they become, until they eat the entire world. A dragon cannot be satisfied. The more treasure it has, the more it desires, until it has the entire treasure of the world and goes mad with the desire for more. The very existence of a living dragon, with its unnatural hungers, causes all types of sickness in the land, spreading pestilence and evil.

Dragons are rumored to be intelligent, but their motivations are unknowable and certainly unnatural. As a foe, a dragon is formidable: well armored, with powerful jaws and tail, it can spit fire and flame. Dragons have been killed in combat, but usually with divine and/or magical weaponry. Fortunately, the premature awakening of a dragon (i.e., before the final battle in the apocalypse) is quite rare.

## ❖ Heretics and Devil-Worshippers ❖

In this era the greatest threat to mankind is Satan himself. Satan tempted man into sin, encouraging all evils small and large. Satan could and did appear to people in virtually any form, offering any number of temptations. With the aid of Christ, man fights a constant battle not only to hold off evil, but to recover those under Satan's sway.

**DEMONS:** These creatures are spawned by Satan, then transported to or materialized

Multiplication



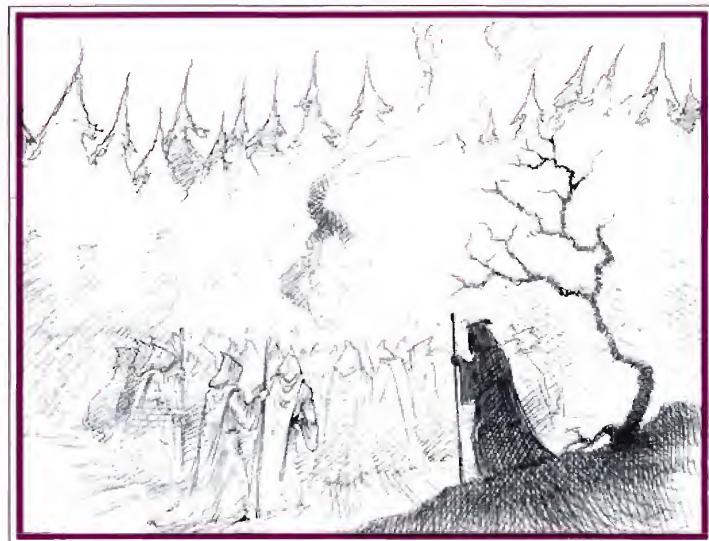
upon the earth. In their natural form, all are grotesque, with beaks, flippers, fish-eyes, rat-tails, and worse. Some are great wizards and magicians, while others are no better than stupid thugs, armed with clubs. A few might be strong warriors, but Satan-worshipping humans usually serve this role better.

Demons can be killed on earth, although many die quite slowly. However, an earthly death simply sends their spirit back to hell, where their existence continues. Therefore demons are almost never afraid of injury or death.

The appearance of demons is a sure sign that either Satan or his henchmen/worshippers are near. Demons almost never appear randomly or on their own.

**HELLHOUNDS:** These dogs of hell are demonic creatures that serve Satanic masters. Larger than normal dogs, they are skeletal, with rat-like tails and large mouths full of ferocious fangs.

Properly speaking, hellhounds are a specific species of demon. They are something like ever-hungry, ferocious, mad wolves.



**GARGOYLES:** These winged creatures are also denizens of judgment and hell. They appear on churches as reminders of the evil in the world. Nobody really understands how living gargoyles are brought into the world, but once "alive" on Earth they cause desolation and destruction. They can be killed like animals, but it is unclear whether they die, or simply return to hell, like a demon.

**UNDEAD:** Witches and satanic priests, using methods unknown, are able to recreate a semblance of life in bodies otherwise long dead. These corpses may contain various amounts of flesh, or may be purely skeletal, depending on their age. Communication with the undead is supposedly possible, suggesting that when reanimated, the bodies retain some of their former knowledge and abilities.

**WITCHES:** Frequently female, these are people who have made a pact with a devil. They give themselves entirely into the power of Satan, and in return receive various unholy and evil gifts or powers. Some witches are solitary. Others organize "sabbats" where they lead a small congregation in the unholy rites of devil-worship.

Witches are known to have powerful curses, which can cause sickness or death. Witches can summon spirits that influence the minds of the unwary, causing illusions, unnatural emotions, and evil acts. This includes summoning Incubi or Succubi to lead astray the unwary. Witches can summon demons for various specific, short purposes. Witches, using various invocations or ointments, can fly on ordinary objects. Witches can have their bodies temporarily inhabited by a devil. This occupation can transform their body into another form and shape. Witches sometimes can change others from human into beast form. Finally, witches have some command over evil weather, and can sometimes call hail or lightning.

**HERETICAL CULTS:** The unhappy condition of the Church inspired various splinter groups throughout the Middle Ages. For example, the Cathars (sometimes termed "Albigensians") created a splinter cult in the 1140s that was eventually declared heresy, resulting in a series of bloody "crusades" in the early 1200s within France that exterminated them.

Another splinter group, now active in Bohemia, are the Hussites. Jan Huss originally sought Church reform, and debated theological issues within Church guidelines. When guaranteed safety, he presented his views at the great Council of Constance in 1415. There he was betrayed, condemned as a heretic, and killed.

This inspired a great rebellion in Bohemia, rallying around a new Hussite religion, and led by the military genius Jan Ziska. The Emperor was unwilling to lose such a rich and important province, so nobles from the rest of Germany formed armies, year after year, for campaigning into Bohemia, to stamp out rebellion and recapture rebel strongholds.

Historically the rebels eventually fell to bickering among themselves on religious issues. Disunited and without external allies, they ultimately were defeated by Imperial forces.

**THE TEMPLARS:** The most famous heretical cult of the Middle Ages was the Knights of the Temple. Originally formed during the Crusades to help provide military manpower and officially recognized in 1128, they became a rich and successful order, despite military reverses in Palestine. Unfortunately, unlike their brother order, the Hospitallers, they ended up with an extremely large, rich headquarters in the heartland of Europe, outside of Paris.

In the early 1300s, King Philip IV ("the Fair") of France, inspired by the dispossessed nobleman Esquiu de Floyran, decided to pursue accusations of heresy against the Templars. The Pope, recently "relocated" to Avignon in France, agreed. In a few years the order was destroyed. Its leaders and members, questioned under horrible tortures, admitted to devil-worshipping rites, including keeping the Head of Baphomet, a demon, on the wall of their council chamber, where they could receive information, advice, and instruction from Satan. The great wealth of the Templars was declared forfeit to the King of France, who thereby managed to escape virtual bankruptcy.



The Templars were soon crushed in France and England. Their disgrace insured the quick demise of their remaining fortresses and possessions in the eastern Mediterranean. However, in Germany and eastern Europe the fate of the Templars varied widely, depending on the attitude of the local prince. Unlike France, no great extermination befell them within the Holy Roman Empire.



Projection



## MEDIEVAL BATTLE

Combat in the late Middle Ages was far more than a battering match between plate-armored lackwits that ended in mutual exhaustion. In this era personal armor reached its zenith, including not only plate armor, but also hand-to-hand weapons, as well as entirely new inventions such as the handgun.

The 15th Century was the heyday of “gothic” plate armor, suits of which still grace various armories and castles throughout Europe. The technology and craftsmanship demanded by true plate armor is quite astounding.

Plate armor used steel rather than simple iron, but even then complete safety was an unobtainable goal. Tournament armor provided the most protection, but was too bulky and cumbersome for most fighting. “Battle” armor was lighter and simpler, so men could move, use weapons freely and fight all day, rather than collapsing from exhaustion and heat prostration after a few hours. However, even a full suit of “battle” plate armor was extremely expensive. No king or

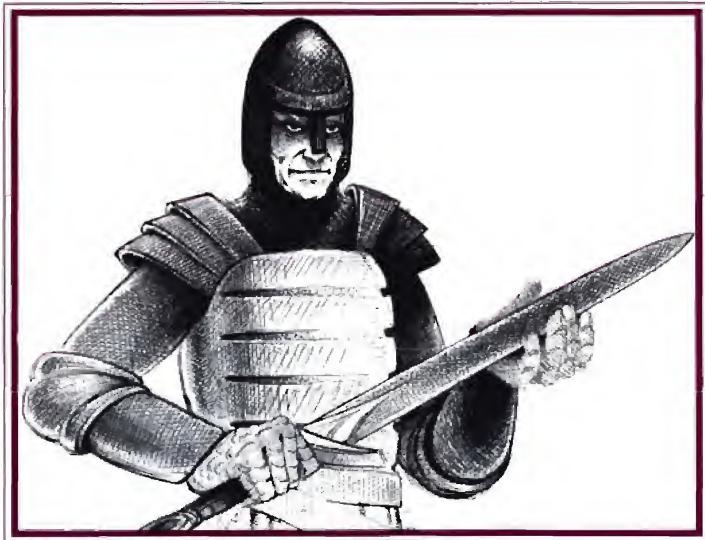
prince could afford to equip an entire army in it. Only noblemen or the rich, who personally owned warhorses and plate armor, brought them to war.

There were also advances in missile weapon technology. The now-traditional crossbow, refined and improved over the centuries, was joined by the handgun. Gunpowder artillery (of uncertain quality) existed in Europe during the 14th Century, but man-carried weapons such as the handgun were new in the 15th. Well-made handguns offered greater damage power and greater penetration over a longer range than any bow or crossbow. However, handguns were more expensive and slower to fire than crossbows, which in turn were slower than traditional bows.

In hand-to-hand (melee) combat, the dominant military concept of the era was the invention (or rediscovery) of the 16-man-deep “pike phalanx.” Originally used by Alexander the Great’s Macedonians in the 300s BC, pikes allowed trained infantry to reliably repulse any cavalry charge, no matter how heavily armed and armored the riders. This was because horses simply could not be trained to impale themselves upon the forest of pike-points. Pike infantry was also quite effective when it charged to the attack; some even considered it unstoppable except by better pikemen.

As a result, successful armies in the 1400s used a mixture of pikes and various missile or melee infantry to defeat the pikes. Cavalry still existed, but it was no longer the dominant military arm.

Another result of the growing usefulness of infantry was its dramatic effect on a feudal society already fractured by the Black Death. With infantry armies, any ambitious and wealthy lord could hire troops, spend a few months equipping and training them, and have a formidable fighting force. The knightly codes and feudal system quickly gave way to primitive military capitalism. Now money was the most important element in prosecuting war. This produced enterprising men who, for a fixed fee, offered to find, equip, train, and lead appropriate troops. These entrepreneurs were the great



mercenary captains. Their “free companies” (because they operated free-lance), large and small, were an important part of many European armies.

Despite these changes, one thing remained the same. Castles and tower “keeps” dominated all military strategy. Primitive cannon only served to spur a new wave of fortress building and reinforcement, designed to withstand bombardment. Artillery technology was not quite advanced enough to batter down a well-built fortress (this would gradually change during the next two centuries). As a result, many wars that began with promising battlefield victories ended in long sieges, with no result beyond one or two fortresses changing hands. For example, the great English victory at Agincourt in 1415 did not end the Hundred Years War. In fact, the war had started in the 1330s and ended in the 1440s — and then in a French victory. In this sense, military affairs were still medieval: a man behind strong walls was a strong man indeed.

## The Nature of Battle

Despite the changes in military methods and equipment, personal combat in the 15th Century remained essentially eyeball-to-eyeball. Even missile troops were obliged to get close, to penetrate the armor of their targets. Combatants personally reached out to maim and kill.

To this end, a warrior concerned himself with how to hit his target, and what sort of damage he might inflict. Weapons and armor interacted in complex ways to produce various advantages and disadvantages. There was no one, universal weapon good in all situations.

**HITTING THE TARGET:** Hand-to-hand combat is a series of blows, where the striker and his opponent compare their weapon skills. Each must have sufficient strength to handle his/her weapon well, or their chance of hitting suffers. Conversely, a man with extraordinary strength can beat aside his opponent and have a superior chance of hitting. Shields, of course, can block incoming blows, reducing the chance of a hit.

In addition, a striker’s abilities are reduced if he simultaneously fights additional opponents, while a target’s weapon

skill is lessened if he simultaneously faces other opponents. Bad visibility and/or impaired eyesight further reduces the chance of hitting.

When firing missiles, the skill of the firer is compared to the target’s agility. Agility is reduced by encumbrance, so the weight carried by the target can be important. A man with more than a light load loses agility, a heavily-laden man has very little agility, and an overburdened man has virtually none. Shields are especially advantageous against missile fire because the direction of attack is more predictable than hand-to-hand strokes, even if the missile is too fast to see. Visibility also plays a large role in missile fire.

Despite all these considerations, battle is still a flurry of blows, moves and counter-moves that yield a proportion of hits and misses. Typically, a great advantage to one side means it hits frequently, while the disadvantaged side hits rarely. When considering tactics, remember that every fight is a gamble. Even the worst opponent may have an exceptionally lucky day and score a devastating hit!

**DAMAGE:** These risks are why warriors wore armor. Those who expected hand-to-hand fighting favored the heaviest armor they could use comfortably. Therefore even if the enemy scored a hit, the armor would absorb at least some and preferably all of the damage.

In *Darklands*, damage to strength represents real, physical wounds that take time to heal. Damage to endurance represents exhaustion, shock and general battering. In general, unless one is very unlucky or has very low endurance, endurance will reach zero before strength. Therefore, fighters tend to collapse before they die. Historically, many battles involving thousands of troops yielded only hundreds of dead, especially those battles which centered around face-to-face, hand-to-hand fighting.

Therefore, with each weapon, one must consider its armor-penetrating ability as well

Separation





as its raw damage power. A very destructive weapon, such as a sword, might do relatively trivial damage if it just bounced off the armor. In *Darklands* these “non-penetrating” hits sometimes inflict a few points of endurance loss (which is easily regained later). They rarely inflict any strength loss (real wounds, which take time to heal), and if they do, the damage is rarely more than one point.

Varying quality affects the ability of armor to protect or weapons to penetrate. In *Darklands*, every ten points of quality difference yields

one level change in penetration or protection.

In battle, non-penetrating hits only cause a small amount of endurance damage. Weapons that barely penetrate armor cause some strength damage, as well as higher endurance losses. Fully penetrating hits achieve the full damage potential of the weapon. Big, destructive weapons like halberds, two-handed swords, etc., can produce lots of damage. Even the strongest man is unlikely to survive more than two or three such blows.

Reduced endurance and strength do not affect agility, carrying ability or weapon use requirements during battle. However, once the fight is over, reduced abilities can cause problems. A character may be obliged to stop using certain weighty items, or else take the time to rest and regain strength.

## ❖ Tactical Options ❖

All tactical options apply to hand-to-hand (melee) combat. Missile firers cannot use them. However, tactical options may have some effect on missile targets.

**BERSERK:** A “berserk” fighter concentrates on making many powerful blows against the enemy and pays little attention to defending himself. The fighter’s chance of hitting in hand-to-hand combat increases, as does the speed of his strikes. However, his vulnerability also increases, making it easier for opponents to hit him. This includes missile fire hits.

This tactic is especially useful for fighters of lesser skill, since otherwise they might be unable to score hits. Similarly, when a second or third warrior joins a fight in progress, a berserk attack can be useful until the victim decides to turn and face this new threat.

**VULNERABLE SPOT:** Here a fighter strikes much more slowly, but places those strikes carefully. If the strike hits, it lands on a less-protected spot with thinner armor. This increases the chance of penetration.

This tactic is best for skillful warriors whose weapons can’t penetrate the enemy’s armor. Here the extra damage achieved by hits that penetrate more than offsets the reduced number of attacks. However, less skillful warriors, who hit infrequently, take large gambles with this tactic. If they hit, they may do well. However, their chance of hitting could be extremely small.

**PARRY:** Here a fighter devotes most of his efforts to defending himself. He strikes infrequently, and with a reduced chance of hitting. However, the enemy has equal difficulty striking the fighter.

This tactic is useful when a fighter is outnumbered, or needs to temporarily hold off a powerful foe until help arrives. Basically, a parrying fighter uses weapon-handling skills to deflect enemy blows. The greater the skill, the more effective the parries. Obviously, this tactic is useless against area-effect weapons such as dragon-flame, demon-fire, and other alchemical or magical attacks.

**MISSILE TACTICS:** There are no special tactics for missile fire. Simply hitting the target (which is usually moving) is hard enough! The best way to avoid enemy missile fire is to get behind trees, walls, etc., using them to screen your movements. Conversely, when firing at the enemy, it is wise

to position yourself with lots of open ground between the firer and the target. Best of all, slow the enemy's approach with terrain and/or stone-tar potions.

Crossbows, arbalests and handguns all have long reloading times. Unless the enemy also prefers a long-range missile duel, you'll probably have time for just one shot before hand-to-hand fighting occurs.

It is possible to organize a party into two ranks, with the first fighting hand-to-hand while the second supports them with missile fire. However, this requires exceptionally skilled missile users. Only high-skill characters can "shoot past" friends accurately. Those with lesser skill will find their fire blocked by friends in front of them.

## Movement and Position

In general, a party should try to position itself so the entire party fights the enemy one by one. This allows you to "divide and conquer." If this is impossible, the party might use terrain or potions to slow down, delay, or confuse at least some of the enemies, while it concentrates on the rest. In some cases, a well-armored and skillful character might step up and engage multiple enemies with "Parry" orders, allowing the rest of the party to concentrate on the few remaining enemies.

**"FLEE" TACTICS:** This option is the only way to "disengage" a character from combat. The character need not flee far. Note that normal "Walk towards" orders often don't allow disengagement, since the automatic "fight anybody within range" prevents the character from walking away from an attacking enemy (the character stops and fights instead).

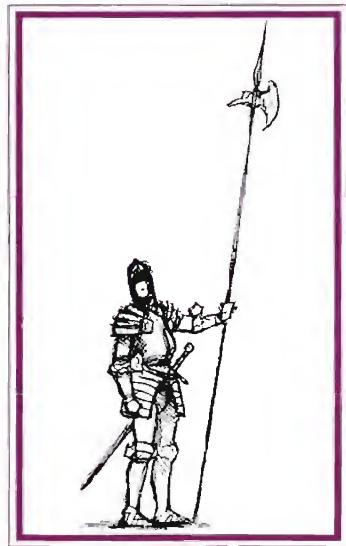
When actually disengaging the entire party from battle, a common tactic is to have one or two characters act as "rear guard." The others flee behind them while the pursuing enemies are stopped by the rear guard. Then the rear guard disengages, hopefully covered by missile fire from their more distant friends.

The "Flee" order is also useful when trying to maneuver in a crowded melee. Normal "Walk toward" moves don't work because the character instantly stops because enemies

are so close. With a "Flee" move, a character can "edge past" an enemy far better.

**Group Movement:** This is convenient when exploring large areas, but useless in battle. As soon as battle threatens, change from group to individual orders.

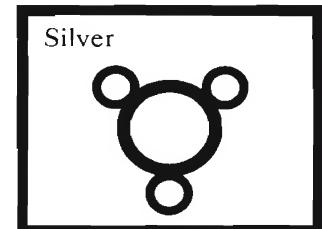
On a larger scale, it is also dangerous to split the party. This invites one or two of the party to be assaulted by the full force of the enemy, before the rest can arrive. In effect, splitting the party allows the enemy to "divide and conquer" you.



## Selecting Weapons

Each weapon has various advantages and disadvantages. In addition to the obvious ones relating to penetration, damage, and one hands or two, there are more subtle distinctions. For example, all weapons have a minimum skill level. If the fighter's skill is below that level, his combat abilities suffer dramatically. Weapons also have a minimum strength. In addition, some weapons have an upper strength threshold (usually between 27 and 35), beyond which the fighter has an extra advantage. Typically, the handier and lighter the weapon, the lower this threshold.

When compared to armor, a weapon that "matches" the armor just barely penetrates it. The weapon therefore penetrates all poorer armors, and cannot penetrate a better armor.



Finally, all weapons are rated for speed. The faster the weapon, the more blows a fighter can deliver, and therefore hits are more frequent.

## Edged Weapons

This category includes the various swords and axes, designed to cut, slash, and slice into an opponent. These are the standard “all-purpose” weapons of the era, useful in almost all situations.

**TWO-HANDED SWORD:** This heavy, two-handed weapon is the most potent of all edged weapons. It requires skill (19+) and strength (21+). Its penetration matches brigandine or chainmail. The full damage effect is formidable.

**LONGSWORD:** This one-handed weapon is quick and handy. It requires good skill (18+) and reasonable strength (19+). Penetration matches scale armor and damage effects are large.

**FALCHION:** This heavy, chopping sword was a favorite sidearm of the 1300s. It requires less skill and strength, while achieving significant damage. However, its penetration only matches the best non-metal armors.

**SHORTSWORD:** This smaller, thrusting sword is a quick infighting weapon that requires moderate skill (16+) and little strength (13+). Its main advantage is penetration that matches chainmail and brigandine. However, it achieves only modest damage.



**SMALL BLADES:** These serve as common sidearms. **PONIARDS** have better penetration (match chainmail and brigandine), while **DAGGERS** do a little more damage.

A character without any weapons is presumed to have a **SMALL KNIFE**. This is easy to handle, but not very powerful.

**BATTLEAXE:** This large, slow, two-handed weapon accomplishes maximum

damage, but has poor penetration (it matches scale). It requires less skill and strength to wield than the two-handed sword, and usually is cheaper.

**HAND AXE:** This one-handed weapon is similar in capability to the falchion. However, it is easier to handle, slightly cheaper, and slightly less destructive.

**FIELD AXE:** This two-handed weapon is better suited to felling trees than combat. It barely penetrates cuirbouilli, does modest damage, and weighs more than the smaller swords and axes. Its sole advantage is cheapness and easy availability.

## Impact Weapons

These weapons are designed to achieve superior penetration against strong armor, but require superior strength and/or skill. Their damage potential is less than edged weapons, but the importance of penetrating armor frequently made them preferred weapons in this century. For example, the great Hussite general Jan Ziska is traditionally portrayed carrying a military hammer.

**GREAT HAMMER:** This large, unwieldy, two-handed weapon can penetrate plate armor. However, it requires considerable skill (20+) and strength (24+), and does less damage than a longsword. It is also an uncommon weapon, made by specialists for specialists, at a high price.

**GIANT CUDGEL:** This extremely heavy, two-handed weapon matches plate armor with sheer force of impact. Most cudgels were wooden clubs reinforced with metal straps or bars. The weapon requires little skill (10+), great strength (27+), and is relatively cheap.

**GIANT MACE OR MAUL:** This two-handed weapon is cheaper and easier to handle (skill 9+, strength 25+) than the giant cudgel, but its penetration only matches chain and brigandine. It is a useful choice when giant cudgels are either unavailable or beyond a fighter's abilities.

**MILITARY HAMMER:** This one-handed sidearm looks like a small pick. The long point is good against plate (which it matches), while the flat head on the other side can be used like a mace. Reasonably fast and light (skill 12+, strength

15+), it is the favorite sidearm of many knights. Its main drawback is a poor damage potential.

**MACE:** This one-handed sidearm was extremely popular, but is now outmoded by plate armor, which it cannot penetrate. The mace produces more damage than the military hammer, but requires less skill (8+) and strength (14+), even though it weighs a bit more.

**CLUB:** This simple, one-handed weapon could be almost anything, including a small log or a heavy stick. Like a mace, it inflicts damage by concussion, but its penetration only matches scale armor. Furthermore, the damage is but slightly superior to a small blade. Fortunately, minimum skill (4+) and strength (16+) are both low.

## ❖ Flails ❖

These weapons have flexible ends, allowing the user to reach up and over obstacles like shields or parrying weapons. Flails are slower weapons, but can be very useful if the enemy relies mainly on large shields for protection.

**TWO-HANDED FLAIL:** This large, slow weapon is based on peasant tools used to thresh grain. Bohemian Hussite rebels favored this weapon. The big flail is powerful enough to match chain or brigandine, achieves good damage, and requires only modest (20+) strength. However, it demands some skill (18+), and is quite heavy.

**MILITARY FLAIL:** This familiar “ball and chain” weapon, inaccurately termed a “morning star,” only matches scale, but does as much damage as a longsword. Although fearsome in appearance, its utility in battle is limited.

## ❖ Polearms ❖

These weapons all have a long handle, ending with a blade, point, or blunt end, as appropriate. All but the quarterstaff are fairly slow and heavy weapons, but make up for it with penetration and damage.

**PIKE:** This exceptionally long (18-21') and heavy (about 17 lbs.) two-handed weapon looks like an extremely long spear. It is a popular infantry weapon for stopping cavalry

charges. However, to be effective it must be used in “blocks” 8 to 16 ranks deep. Its penetration matches chain or brigandine. Its cheapness is a great attraction to nobles forming armies, despite the need for considerable skill (21+).

**LONG SPEAR:** This one-handed weapon can match scale armor, is easy to use (skill 12+, strength 20+), achieves reasonable damage, and is cheap. However, is it fairly heavy, and somewhat slow.

**SHORT SPEAR:** This weapon is a “junior” version of the long spear, lighter and easier to handle in all respects (skill 8+, strength 17+), but without sacrificing penetration. Of course, damage is somewhat less. It is among the cheapest of all weapons.

**HALBERD:** This two-handed weapon has a blade with various points and/or hooks on the end, depending on the specific design. Although heavy and slow, its penetration matches chain or brigandine, and it does fearsome damage. It requires significant skill (19+), good strength (23+), and is fairly expensive.

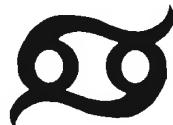
**QUARTERSTAFF:** This cheap, easily-fashioned weapon is no more than a 6' length of smooth wood. Its miserable penetration barely matches ordinary leather, but it is very fast and easy to handle (skill 10+, strength 16+). Should penetration occur, damage potential is almost equal to a sword. However, it is a two-handed weapon, preventing the use of a shield.

## ❖ Thrown Weapons ❖

All these are one-handed weapons. Historians still debate how much they were used; for example, some accounts of Agincourt (1415) describe the English men-at-arms throwing axes at the French just before the melee was joined, while others insist that it never happened.

**THROWING AXE:** This is the heaviest throwing weapon available, with damage power

Solution



equivalent to a sword if it connects. Moderate skill (19+) is needed, and thrown penetration only matches cuirbouilli or studded leather.

**JAVELIN:** This light spear, about 3' long, is easy to handle (skill 10+), but rather bulky. Damage power is superior to an arrow, while penetration matches scale armor.

**DART:** Military darts are mostly or all metal, with a lead weight on the shaft for balance and accuracy. Popular in the Balkans and beyond, darts are easily carried and require modest skill (11+), yet their penetration matches scale armor. Damage potential is also modest: slightly less than an arrow. In Germany darts are rare and somewhat costly.

**THROWING KNIFE:** This lightweight weapon can penetrate non-metal armor, but does little damage. Exceptional skill (30+) is required.

## ❖ Bows ❖

Bows are the fastest-firing long-range missile weapons available, and quite popular throughout Europe. However, bows are two-handed weapons, and the damage potential of an arrow is modest. Men frequently survived multiple arrow hits, especially if armor reduced the force of impact.

**LONGBOW:** Made exclusively in England, longbows were imported to Germany across the North Sea. Still, these weapons are rare and costly, especially because the bow can penetrate all armor. This powerful weapon requires both skill (25+) and strength (20+).

**COMPOSITE Bow:** This Asiatic weapon is the rarest, most expensive, and most valuable of all bows. Some Polish and Hungarian cavalry use these weapons. Great skill (30+) and good strength (22+) are needed. Penetration and damage is equal to a longbow, but the overall weight and bulk is less — because it is designed for cavalry use. Construction methods are outrageously complex: Central Asian bowyers sometimes needed ten or twenty years to correctly “cure” the materials in such a bow!

**SHORT Bow:** This is the ordinary, traditional “self” bow used throughout Europe and beyond. It requires moderate

skill (20+) and modest strength (16+). Although unable to penetrate plate armor, it is fairly effective against anything else. Damage potential is the same as the other bows, but its cost and weight are less.

## ❖ Mechanical Missiles ❖

These devices fire missiles using mechanical or chemical power. All of them require both hands. Gunpowder weapons were first seen in Europe during the 14th Century, and then only as castle-smashing artillery. Man-portable firearms are new in the 15th Century, but by the 1460s and 70s many armies had large forces of handgunners.

**CROSSBOW:** This is the standard mechanical bow used in Europe for centuries. Cocking mechanisms varied from belthook-and-stirrup to a simple mechanical lever. Crossbows can penetrate any armor, do as much damage as a bow arrow, are easy to operate (skill 14+) and require modest strength (18+). However, they are weighty and reload far more slowly than a normal bow.

**ARBALEST:** This is a much heavier version of the crossbow that uses even slower reloading mechanisms, such as hand cranks. It has superior penetrating power, does a bit more damage, and only requires a little more strength and skill than a normal crossbow. Its great disadvantage is a huge weight (almost 20 pounds), not to mention a fairly high price.

**IRON HANDGUN:** This simple handgun is typical of early, crude firearms. It barely matches plate armor, does more damage than an arbalest, and requires less skill (12+) and strength (17+). Unfortunately it is weighty (14 pounds), and reloads more slowly than any other weapon.

**BRASS HANDGUN:** This is typical of the high-quality handguns available from the best craftsmen in Europe. Its penetrating power matches an arbalest, damage is superior to either crossbow or arbalest, and both skill and strength requirements are a bit less than the iron handgun. It also weighs less. Unfortunately, it is very expensive, and not especially easy to find.

## Armor

In the late Middle Ages, two major types of armor existed: tournament and battle armor. Many museums and simple books about armor fail to distinguish between these types. This leads simplistic writers to peculiar conclusions. For example, many people think tournament armor was used in battle, and therefore can't imagine how medieval knights managed to move, much less fight.

Tournament (or jousting) armor was designed purely for this sport. It was intended to fully protect the wearer from injury. The armor was thick and heavy, with poor visibility and limited motion. Such qualities were acceptable for tournaments, but almost useless on a battlefield. This was especially true when battles were not decided by the crash of heavy cavalry charges, one against another. On the other hand, the use of extremely expensive, specialized tournament armor helped restrict that sport to the nobility and the very rich.

The other armor type, battle armor, is the norm in *Darklands*. This "every day" armor was worn by troops from the guardhouse to the battlefield. It was a compromise between strength, flexibility, and weight. Many times battle armor was covered with cloth; other times men wore tabards, cloaks or robes on top, to reduce maintenance and moderate temperature effects (armor can get very hot in the summer and quite cold in the winter). Almost all metal armor was worn over a padded, quilted "arming" garment that reduced chafing, as well as absorbing the impact of blows on the metal.

Of course, the lines between the two armor types can blur. For example, some knights used some (but not all) of their tournament armor in battle, and vice versa.

In *Darklands* there are five basic levels of armor protection. Ranked from best to worst, these are (1) plate, (2) brigandine and chainmail, (3) scale, (4) cuirbouilli and studded leather, (5) leather and padded armor

**PLATE ARMOR:** This is the finest armor available. It is made of articulated steel plates that move with the wearer, yet keep the body completely covered. It is stronger than any other types, but also quite heavy.



In the 15th Century many well-equipped soldiers only used plate armor on their vitals (head, torso, and sometimes the hips). They then used lighter armor on their arms and legs.

**BRIGANDINE:** This is a "coat of plates" sandwiched between two layers of leather. Easier to assemble than true plate armor, it provides almost as much protection. Since the basic materials include numerous steel plates, the cost is high. Brigandine armor covering the vitals is common among infantry forces throughout Europe in the later 15th Century.

**CHAINMAIL:** This is the old, traditional metal armor of European warriors. Made of small, interlocking metal circles, it produces a flexible but strong garment. Chain skirts, leggings, shirts, etc. are all common. "Chain" provides as much protection as brigandine, with less weight, but at a slightly higher price.

**SCALE:** This is the cheapest metal armor still in common use, popular mainly in Eastern Europe. Scale armor is made of small metal scales that overlap. The overlap conceals laces that hold each scale to a leather backing. Scale armor gives poor protection against upward-thrusting blows, which slide between the scales. Therefore scale armor provides less protection than brigandine or chainmail, but it is significantly cheaper.

**CUIRBOUILLI:** The strongest non-metal armor available, cuirbouilli is stiff leather moul-

Sublimation



ded into curved sections, then repeatedly dipped in boiling wax. The result is so hard and stiff that it is worn in plates, buckled on like metal. However, cuirbouilli provides less protection than any metal armor. Of course, it also weighs much less: a complete suit of metal armor might be 45 to 60 pounds, while complete cuirbouilli coverage is only one-third to one-quarter of that. The cost is also much less than metal armor.

**STUDED LEATHER:** This armor is stiff but flexible leather reinforced with metal rivets, coin-sized "plates," and/or metal rings. The combination provides protection equivalent to cuirbouilli, but with fewer manufacturing problems (and thus a lower cost). On the negative side, studded leather weighs a little more than cuirbouilli.

**LEATHER:** This ancient form of armor is used by those who value speed and agility more than protection, or those who can't afford more! Many armies saved armor costs by giving infantrymen metal armor for vitals and leather armor



for limbs. Basic leather armor provides less protection than cuirbouilli or studded leather, but weighs and costs much less.

**PADDED:** Also termed "quilted" armor, this protection has two layers of cloth, with rags and cloth scraps sandwiched between. The layers are then cross-stitched in a grid-pattern. This means a slash or puncture only empties the stuffing in the pocket affected, rather than the entire garment. This armor provides protection similar to basic leather, weighs more, and costs less.

## ❖ Shields ❖

Shields are only useful when using one-handed weapons. In this era all shields had a solid metal rim with a face of wood or light metal covered by cloth or leather. The primary value of a shield is in defending against missiles. Its protection value in hand-to-hand combat is secondary. As the penetrating power of missiles increased, the ability of shields to stop them waned. This is why most armies stopped using shields entirely in the next century: they were ineffective against the successors to the handgun.

**SMALL SHIELDS** only weigh five pounds, and provide the least additional protection.

**MEDIUM SHIELDS** weigh ten pounds, but provide significantly more protection.

**LARGE SHIELDS** weigh fifteen pounds, and provide the most protection.

## ❖ Death ❖

A character dies when his or her strength reaches zero (0). There is no way to restore characters from death. To avoid this final end, either increase a character's strength or restore lost strength through potions and/or the saints. Even if strength is only temporarily increased, when the potion or miracle "wears off" strength will not drop below one (1).

In long, extended battles and explorations, if your party simply rests for a while (does nothing), you may regain a little endurance. In most cases, though, endurance cannot be regained until you leave the action.

## MEDIEVAL ALCHEMY

Alchemy was founded as a “science” by the Greeks in Alexandria during the Second Century AD. Its body of knowledge was acquired and expanded upon by the Moslem Arabs after they swept over the Middle East in the 700s. The Arabs also added knowledge gained from the Chinese, with whom they had distant contacts. When the Crusaders from Europe invaded the Middle East in the 1100s, they brought alchemy back with them to Europe, which quickly spawned European experiments.

Alchemists were early chemists. By combining, dissolving, sublimating, or precipitating various materials, they could produce certain simple, predictable reactions. However, without scientific method and vacuum pumps (developed by Robert Boyle in the 1600s), alchemists could not discover gases, crucial to the true understanding of chemistry. Some alchemists, including many successful physicians, were content to observe results and repeat certain techniques. Others invented various theories explaining the phenomenon they observed. Many European alchemists had clerical training, so some were inclined to attribute certain results to the actions of invisible demons, while others indulged in philosophical speculations about the nature of the universe. Many famous medieval philosophers dabbled in alchemy, including Roger Bacon and Thomas Aquinas.

The plethora of alchemical theory quickly led to wild speculation. Alchemists observed certain substances changing color and form. Just as they could precipitate salt from seawater, so did they hope to precipitate gold from solutions of base metals. Lead was a popular choice because it was both inexpensive and already quite dense. Many theorized that a universal catalyst was the secret to this transmutation. This catalyst was the “Philosopher’s Stone.” They understood enough chemistry to know that catalysts are not consumed in reactions, and therefore can be reused. Hence the extraordinary value of a universal catalyst. In fact, some even hoped

that appropriate materials and catalysts could be found to create an elixir of eternal life, or at least a powerful healing potion.

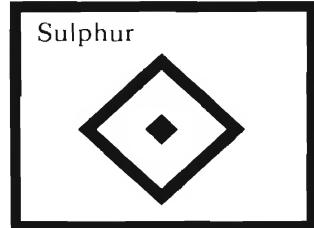
Many medieval alchemists were showmen (or women). They used simple reactions and experiments to impress their audience — preferably a rich nobleman. Holding out the hope of transmutation, they acquired important court positions and a good living, at least for a while. Even if the gold never materialized, a flashy alchemist lent immense prestige to a noble’s court. For example, the rich and powerful Duke of Burgundy sponsored many alchemists. The most successful alchemists were very charismatic and remarkably convincing.

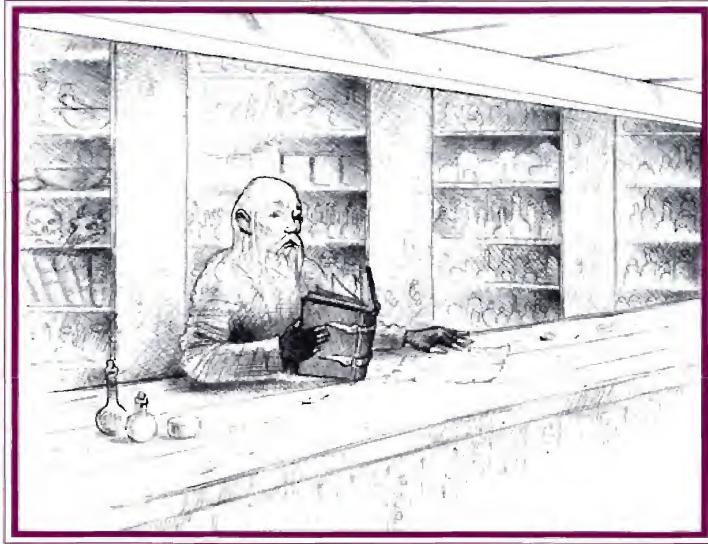
Alchemists were also secretive. They recorded materials, experiments and results in a code, a shorthand of unique and frequently private “scientific” symbols. These codes and ciphers were to discourage “theft” of their valuable knowledge. Of course, this also prevented anyone from examining their information and challenging it. It also greatly enhanced the prestige of one who supposedly commanded this secret, mystical knowledge.

**ALCHEMY FOR ADVENTURERS:** In *Darklands*, the universal catalyst, the Philosopher’s Stone, really exists. Novice alchemists have a limited, low-quality stone, but with effort it can be improved, usually by trading with other alchemists and university scholars. Meanwhile, the budding alchemist must search the land for various raw materials and formulas.

The most effective approach to alchemy is specialization. It is more useful to have one good alchemist than four poor ones. The single good alchemist can mix potions for the entire party. This is possible whenever a party takes up residence somewhere, including city or village inns, as well as

Sulphur





camping outdoors. Provided you have decent skill, know the formula and purchase sufficient ingredients, anything can be created with enough time and luck. Of course, bad luck can cause destructive results. When creating characters, you may prefer older, more experienced alchemists, even if that means weaker attributes.

It is also possible to purchase potions, ready-made, from other alchemists. However, these can be difficult to find and costly to acquire. Furthermore, alchemy and other intellectual skills may be needed for successful dealing with other alchemists.

Many alchemical potions are useful in battle. They can attack enemies, reduce their abilities, and improve character's offensive or defensive abilities. The "Essence of Grace," a healing potion, is especially useful. Finally, when facing fiery dragons or demons, "Firewall" is indispensable for those who don't know the requisite saints.

## ❖ Alchemical Materials ❖

*Darklands* alchemy uses nineteen special substances, plus four general "bases" of common materials. These are listed below in order of rarity (from the most rare to the most common). Astute adventures will notice that these raw materials are extremely easy to carry, even in large quantities.

**MARSH VAPOR:** A natural gas, whose medieval admixture produced a sharp smell. Acquiring and containing this vapor was extremely difficult because it is virtually colorless. It is also known as methane.

**NAPHTHA:** First used by the Arabs in incendiary devices, it is a highly volatile, inflammable oil. Various types can be distilled from wood, coal, and petroleum.

**MANGANES:** A rare ore that, when refined, purified, and heated, burns quite brightly. It is also known as magnesium.

**ORPIMENT:** This sulphur-arsenic compound is bright yellow, can appear in large masses, and frequently figured in important alchemical reactions. It is also known as trisulfide of arsenic.

**WHITE CINNABAR:** This silvery-white metal is usually found as a powder, because it is extremely brittle. It is also extremely poisonous, but still useful (in small quantities) as a compound in certain medicines. Sometimes used in glassmaking, it is also known as arsenic.

**BLACK BEAN:** This material, originally acquired from the East, is reddish-brown. It has a strong taste and certain unique but temporary stimulating effects on the body. It is also known as cocoa.

**ZINKBLENDE:** This clear, cleavable ore can yield a wide variety of results in various situations. It is also known as sphalerite, or zinc sulfide.

**ANTIMONI:** This silvery-white powder is very brittle, and invariably contains other trace elements. It is resistant to certain chemicals, can be used as a hardening agent, and is also known as antimony.

**AQUA REGIA:** A very strong, volatile and dangerous acid, this can dissolve almost anything, including people. It is a mixture of nitric acid and hydrochloric acid.

**GUM:** A sticky, resilient and strong material, it often includes pitch or resin. The purer forms generally were imported from the Middle East.

**MONDRAGORA:** A natural substance, reputedly from a plant, with many mystical properties.

**ALUM:** A very astringent powder, used in dyes and baking powders, or alone to induce vomiting. At this time the only known sources were in Italy and Asia Minor (Turkey). It is also known as ammonium bisulfate, potassium aluminum sulfate, or sometimes (incorrectly) as aluminum sulfate.

**CAMOMILE:** A supposedly rare plant whose dried leaves have various properties, often medicinal. Actually, it is fairly common, but easily mistaken.

**PITCHBLENDE:** A mineral that is a lustrous brownish-black. When added to certain procedures, it can produce a slightly glowing material. It is also known as uranium oxide or radium oxide.

**ZINKEN:** A bluish-white salt that can improve metals, especially steel. It also has various medicinal properties. It is also known as zinc.

**NIKEL:** A hard, silver-white material that can be formed into a metal. It is much more useful when mixed with other materials, such as steel, where it adds strength and durability. It is also known as nickel.

**BRIMSTONE:** Pale yellow crystals that burn with a blue flame and emit a horrible stench (like rotten eggs). It is sometimes associated with demons and Hell. It is useful in many compounds, including gunpowder. It is also known as sulfur.

**PURE GOLD:** A dark yellow metal that is very soft and heavy. It is considered extremely valuable. At somewhat lesser purity it is formed in bars or small, thin round coins for monetary purposes.

**MELANCHOLIC (MELANC) BASE:** A variety of plants considered useful in alchemy, such as bell mushrooms, belladonna, camphor, hemlock, seed of sea holly, nightshade, thorn apple, henbane, turpentine, etc.

**SANGUINE BASE:** A variety of animal materials, such as eye of newt, toad tongues, bat claws, powdered unicorn horn, etc.

**CHOLERIC BASE:** A variety of acids and other liquids considered useful, including aqua fortis, vitriol and Roman vitriol, alcohol, distilled water, etc.

**PHLEGMATIC BASE:** A variety of common minerals, such as kupfer (copper), lead, lime (calcium oxide), quicksilver, and kohle (coal).

## Alchemical Formulas

There are 66 different alchemical formulas, divided into 22 different groups. Each formula group has three variations, with each variation named after its original source. Easier formulas have lower magic numbers, but also produce a lower-quality potion. The three versions are listed in order, from easiest to hardest, and thus from the lowest quality results to the highest.

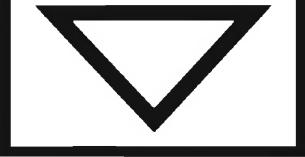
Formulas also have various danger levels. These danger levels are only important when mixing your own potions. If a mixing failure occurs, the danger level (plus a certain amount of luck) determines the size of the disaster. An inept and unlucky alchemist could blow up himself and the rest of the party!

**Noxious Aroma:** (NoxAro) Formulas from al-Razi, Gerard of Cremona, and Petrus Bonus. This potion produces a powerful stink that reduces the agility, perception, and skills of everyone within the cloud. Those closer to the center are more powerfully affected. Duration varies with quality, from about 5 to 15 seconds.

**EYEBURN:** (Eyebrn) Formulas from Solomon, Galen and Nicolas Flammel. If this potion directly hits a character, he or she is blinded, immobilized, and significantly hampered. Those nearby are hampered, but not fully blinded. Duration varies with quality, from about 8 to 25 seconds.

**SUNBURST:** (Sunbst) Formulas from Africa, Raimundus Lullus and Brother Elias. This potion is a flash bomb that blinds the enemy, who then act only in

Water

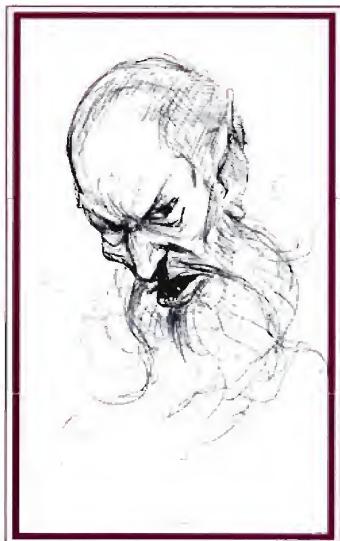


self-defense. Friends are not blinded because the user warns them in advance. Duration varies with quality, and lasts about 12 to 25 seconds.

**BLACK CLOUD:** (BlkCld) Formulas from the Orient, Rufinus of Genoa, and Michael Scot. This potion slowly creates a large, black cloud of smoke. This “smoke screen” is very useful in many situations. However, it cannot be used in battle because the screen takes too long to form.

**STONE-TAR:** (Stonetr) Formulas from Sina, Albertus Magnus and Robert de Keten. This creates a puddle of sticky black goo that slows anyone moving through it. The speed reduction varies with the quality of the potion. After about four minutes the puddle hardens, making the area passable.

**FLEADUST:** (Fleadst) Formulas from al-Razi, Nicolas Flammel, and Richard Anglicus. This creates a cloud that causes horrible itching and irritation. The stronger a character’s armor (on both vitals and limbs), the more his or her skills are reduced. Duration varies with quality, from about 20 to 60 seconds.



**THUNDERBOLT:** (Thun-dr) Formulas from al-Tamimi, Maimonides, and Arnald of Villanova. This potion explodes like a cannon. Damage varies with potion quality, while penetration power is great at the explosion site, then decreases quickly with distance. The explosion may also damage armor (reducing its quality).

**EATER-WATER:** (Eat-War) Formulas from Solomon, Alfred of Sareshel, and Gerard of Cremona. This powerful vitriol eats through vitals and limb armor of whomever it strikes, reducing armor quality. When the

armor is destroyed, any remaining power inflicts damage on the person. The amount of armor quality destroyed varies with potion quality and luck, from 3 to 15.

**ARABIAN FIRE:** (AFire) Formulas from Geber, Zadith, and Hugh. This potion explodes into bits of flaming liquid, like Greek Fire. The amount of damage varies with the distance from the burst. Armor does not protect against this weapon; in fact, armor also suffers quality damage from the flames. Even metal armor is affected, as straps burn off and moving parts become pitted or misshapen. The quality of the potion affects the amount of damage, as does luck.

**BREATH OF DEATH:** (BDeath) Formulas from the Smaragdinian tablet, al-Kindi and Simon Cordo. This potion explodes into a deadly mist that can injure or even kill anyone near the bursting point. Armor provides no defense. The quality of the potion affects the amount of damage, as does luck. The mist dissipates almost immediately.

**DEADLY BLADE:** (DeadBld) Formulas from Hayyan, Vicent of Beauvis, and Roger of Hereford. This potion improves the amount of damage a weapon can inflict. The increase varies with quality. The potion affects all weapons except impact and flail types. Duration is about one day.

**STRONGEDGE:** (StrgEdg) Formulas from al-Majriti, John of Rupescissa, and Petrus Bonus. This potion improves the penetration of a weapon. The increase varies with potion quality. The potion only affects edged weapons and polearms. Duration is about one day.

**GREATPOWER:** (Grtpwr) Formulas from ibn Rushd, Jildaki and Albertus Magnus. This potion increases the overall quality of a weapon, up to a limit of 99. The amount of increase varies with potion quality. Only impact weapons, flails and handguns can be improved with this potion. Duration is about one day.

**TRUEFLIGHT:** (TruFlt) Formulas from ibn Umail, al-Bitruji, and John Dausten. This potion improves the accuracy of a missile weapon; that is, it increases the chance of a hit. The amount of increase varies with the potion quality. Duration is about one day.

**HARDARMOR:** (HrdArm) Formulas from ibn Yazid, Brother Elias, and Leonard of Maurperg. This potion improves the quality and thickness of one person's armor (both vitals and limbs). Thickness increases one or two levels, while quality improves 20 to 30 points. Duration is one day.

**TRUESIGHT:** (TruSgt) Formulas by Arfa Ras, Rufinus of Genoa, and Leonard of Maurperg. This potion improves a person's perception. The amount of improvement (10-30) varies with potion quality and luck. Duration is one day.

**NEW-WIND:** (NewWnd) Formulas by Sina, Michael Scot, and John of Rupescissa. This potion temporarily increases a person's endurance. The amount of increase (7-16) varies with the potion quality and luck. Duration is about one day.

**IRONARM:** (Ironarm) Formulas by Jabir, Robert de Ketene, and Hugh. This potion temporarily increases a person's strength. The amount of increase (7-16) varies with the potion quality and luck. Duration is about one day. Despite any wounds, when the potion wears off a person will not die for lack of strength.

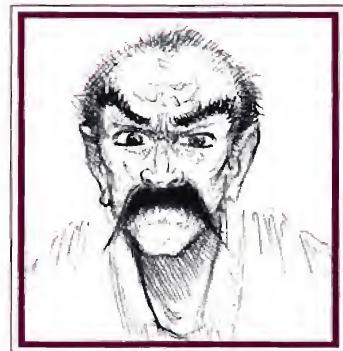
**QUICKMOVE:** (Quckmov) Formulas by Hayyan, John Dausten, and Richard Anglicus. This potion temporarily increases a person's agility. The amount of increase (7-18) varies with the potion quality and luck. Duration is one day. When the potion wears off, agility never drops below one (1).

**ESSENCE OF GRACE:** (EssGrc) Formulas by Galen, Michael Scot, and Avicenna. This potion restores lost endurance and strength, especially the former. The exact amount

restored varies with the potion strength. The restoration is permanent (i.e., the potion acts as a "cure").

**FIREWALL:** (Firewal) Formulas by Jabir, Maimonides, and Raimundus Lullus. This potion enhances armor quality, but only against flame attacks. Duration is about one day. This formula is almost indispensable when fighting dragons or demons who have flame weapons.

**TRANSFORMATION:** (Transf) Formulas by Morienus, Avicenna, and Nicolaus of Autrecourt. Potions from this formula can be used to purify certain sites, and if one is very fortunate, transform worthless metal into a florin of gold. However, all require a certain amount of pure gold to act as "seed" material. Generally, the cost of the "seed" (i.e., the components) exceeds the value of the florin that results.



## THE UNIVERSAL CHURCH

The Universal (Catholic) Church in *Darklands* is based on the historical Church as it existed in the 15th Century. The beliefs portrayed are appropriate to the people of this era. Of course, the Church and the beliefs in the game are *nothing* like the modern Catholic Church. In the late 1500s and early 1600s the Church underwent a dramatic change, a vast “house-cleaning” during the Counter-Reformation that cured many ills and created many new, vital institutions. Furthermore, modern man frequently approaches the role of religion in life quite differently from medieval man.

In fact, even during the 1400s many people regarded the Church as decadent and/or confused. By 1409 it had no less than three competing Popes (Benedict XIII in Avignon, Gregory XII in Rome, and Alexander V in Pisa). In a series of great councils, this chaos was resolved, but the remaining “one” Pope was quite poor, and his city (Rome) was threatened by various invading powers. As a result, the Roman Popes of the late 1400s seemed more like secular princes than theological leaders. For example, in 1492 Rodrigo Borgia became Pope Alexander VI. His son and daughter (through a mistress), Cesare and Lucretia Borgia, are infamous to this day.

In addition to poor Popes, the Church suffered many other evils. Simony (the sale of church positions, usually to noblemen) was normal practice. Men who purchased these

priesthoods, abbeys, bishoprics or archbishoprics could hold more than one, and frequently lived somewhere else entirely! They entrusted day-to-day affairs to rapacious subordinates who were expected to extract sufficient gifts, tithes, etc. to make the purchase profitable!

Despite the rule of celibacy, clerics from country priests to the Pope himself

had mistresses. Excommunications were invoked and revoked to suit immediate political ends. “Indulgences” could be purchased that virtually pardoned any sin — for a price. On the opposite end of the scale, priests in small villages and hamlets often were as poor as the peasants, ignorant of Latin, unable to say mass correctly, and all too often subservient to the local nobleman (i.e., strongman).

Many church ceremonies and beliefs were overlaid with superstition and ignorance. The trade in relics was so brisk that one cleric quipped that there were enough pieces of the “True Cross” to make a forest. He was answered that this was just one more holy miracle!

This confusion of altruistic theology and decadent reality led to a similar duality among the worshippers, the common people of the land. Clerics might be viewed with suspicion, but nobody doubted God’s existence, nor His ability to reward or punish, either now or in the life hereafter. Belief in miracles and divine aid was commonplace. The concept that saints interceded between a worshipper and God was easy to grasp, especially if a saint was “useful” for specific things. Similarly, saintly relics might be expected to provide specific kinds of aid.

A practical person could see a practical value in all this. A miner would pray to St. Barbara, while an archer might choose St. Sebastian. Having directed their prayers correctly, each would confidently expect a little aid in their endeavors. Even those who doubted might still pray, if only as insurance. For similar reasons, clerics from friars to prelates were feared: they might command divine aid for themselves, or possibly visit divine displeasure on their enemies. The unspoken threat of this was enough in many situations.

Monasteries in this era were a great church institution, many dating back to the Dark Ages. Here monks or nuns supposedly retired from all worldly affairs and devoted their attention to God. In the darkest ages, monks kept alive the flame of knowledge. But in this era, many monasteries and convents became corrupt. Some were thriving businesses



with vast lands, competing with guilds and merchants. Others were great political states, such as the Abbey of Fulda, itself a minor principality.

A new development in the Middle Ages was the mendicant friars, such as the Franciscans. Originally these were travelling preachers and pilgrims, men who lived on alms and helped those in need, emulating Christ's first disciples. Alas, by the 15th Century some friars were ignorant louts or lazy beggars, living from largess. Others were charismatic confidence-men, making wild speeches and soliciting donations for imaginary purposes.

The 1400s were the last and worst years of the "old" medieval Church. In 1517 Martin Luther posted his famous 95 theses, sparking the Protestant Reformation, which in turn sparked the Catholic Counter-Reformation. These twin events swept away the old Church. In its place evolved the modern Catholic Church, an orderly, carefully regulated, and far more altruistic institution.

**MORALITY IN DARKLANDS:** Ethics and morality in the Middle Ages was somewhat different from today. Violence was a common part of life. The general sentiment was that fighting, *per se*, does not affect virtue. The goal of the fight was the important thing. Virtuous goals made the fight acceptable, petty or evil goals made it wrong. Of course, people still treasured peace. Constant fighting was considered immoral too.

Direct, physical attacks against the Church, or pursuing heretical activities (such as worshipping Satan) were wrong. No matter what the situation or extenuating circumstances, it was never virtuous to attack or kill weak, defenseless clerics. Similarly, unprovoked attacks on the aged, the infirm, or the defenseless were reviled. However, should a Priest or Bishop attack with a sword, he could be fought without risk to one's soul.

## ❖ Medieval Saints ❖

In medieval Europe, saints were one of the most popular aspects of the Catholic Church. Their cults were many and varied. People with a simple concept of their religion saw

saints as little more than demi-gods—someone to whom you prayed for a specific goal. Of course, some churches, cathedrals, and monasteries encouraged a larger conception of saints, especially their own patron saint(s). Still, even their services and ceremonies promoted a sense of mystery, awe, and the miraculous.

A specific method for canonizing saints did not exist until 1638. In the 15th Century saints included those recognized by the Pope as worthy of veneration on their appropriate day, plus those popularly recognized in the region. Certain saints were extremely popular in some areas, while virtually unknown in others. Learning about all the saints was more than a lifetime activity for any man, and complicated by the fact that new people were hailed as saints at every turn.

The saints in *Darklands* include many popular during the Middle Ages. Many of these are no longer officially venerated by inclusion on the Papal calendar. For example, Barbara was a very popular medieval saint, one of the "fourteen holy helpers" and the patroness of miners. In the later Middle Ages artillery gunners chose her as their patron, while in the early modern period she was adopted by architects and builders. Today most scholars doubt that she even existed; her name was removed from the Vatican's Calendar in 1969.

**SAINTS AND ADVENTURING:** When praying to saints, the "skills" of virtue and religious training are invaluable. Every saint requires a certain level of virtue, so the higher your virtue, the more saints are available for prayer. Furthermore, if your virtue exceeds the required amount, there is a bonus to your chance of success.



The desirability of high virtue, and the requirement that a person know a saint before praying to him or her, might suggest that a party have just one “religious specialist.” However, the divine favor (DF) cost for each prayer can be very high. Frequently a character will exhaust all his or her DF in one to three calls. Therefore, spreading saintly knowledge among the party can be useful, so all party members can pray to saints at various times, not just one or two.

The best way to restore exhausted divine favor is to spend time praying (while “staying here” in camp or at an inn), and to visit city churches and cathedrals for confession and mass. If you need to restore large amounts of DF quickly, large tithes or gifts to churches or cathedrals are appropriate. The rate at which DF is restored depends on a character’s religious training.

The best way to learn about new saints is to visit monasteries and universities around the land. Needless to say, knowledge of Latin, as well as Reading and Writing, are crucial in researching information about saints. Good religious training doesn’t hurt either!

## ❖ Darklands Saints ❖

It is quite unlikely that any one party will learn all the different saints known in *Darklands*. The sheer size of Greater Germany, plus the dictates of chance, suggest that at least some saints will remain undiscovered.

The reputed aid saints can provide is summarized below, along with minimum virtue required and their saint day. Actual aid may vary with the situation. Improvements to strength or endurance may be restoration of lost amounts, or true improvements. “Weapons” indicates an improvement in all weaponry skills. “Translation” is a theological term that means flying (moving through the air without visible support). For a key to the abbreviations, see page 93.

Unless otherwise noted, the normal duration for saintly aid is one day.

**ADRIAN** (Virt 43) Dec 1; Chr, Weapons, End.  
**AGATHA** (Virt 24) Feb 5; Chr, End (more if female).  
**AGNES** (Virt 19) Jan 21; improves Local Rep, Chr.

**AIDAN** (Virt 23) Jan 31; WdWs; helps with animals.  
**ALBERT THE GREAT** (Virt 39) Nov 15; Int, Per, SpkL, R&W, Alch.  
**ALCUIN** (Virt 44) May 19; Int, SpkL, R&W.  
**ALEXIS** (Virt 28) Jul 17; improves Local Rep, Chr, provides a little money if extremely poor.  
**ANDREW** (Virt 14) Nov 30; End, Chr, Improves Local Rep in distant lands.  
**ANDREW THE TRIBUNE** (Virt 37) Aug 19; most Weapons.  
**ANTHONY** (Virt 35) Jan 17; Chr, SpkC, SpkL, R&W, Str, End; may banish a powerful demon.  
**ANTHONY OF PADUA** (Virt 59) Jun 13; Str, Per, Chr, wImp, SpkC, SpkL.  
**ARNULF** (Virt 18) Jul 18; Str, Per, Weapons, SpkL, R&W, StrW, Ride.  
**APOLLINARIUS** (Virt 78) Jan 8; Str, End; frequently routs enemies.  
**BARBARA** (Virt 32) Dec 4; wMsD, Artf; sometimes prevents death.  
**BATHILDIS** (Virt 21) Jan 30; Int, Per.  
**BONIFACE** (Virt 25) Jun 5; Chr, Weapons, SpkC.  
**CATHERINE OF ALEXANDRIA** (Virt 46) Nov 25; Int, Chr, SpkC.  
**CATHERINE OF SIENA** (Virt 33) Apr 29; Per, Chr, SpkC; sometimes senses evil or foresees future.  
**CECILIA** (Virt 41) Nov 22; Chr, Improves Local Rep; can prevent suffocation or drowning.  
**CEOLWULF** (Virt 23) Jan 15; Str, Int, Per, Weapons, SpkL.  
**CHARITY** (Virt 40) Aug 1; End; may improve party armor against flame, greatly improves one person’s armor against anything.  
**CHRISTINA THE ASTONISHING** (Virt 54) Jul 24; Agl, Chr; sometimes allows translation.  
**CHRISTOPHER** (Virt 31) Jul 25; Str, End, wBow, StrW, WdWs, Ride; improves travel speed for a week.  
**CLARE** (Virt 33) Aug 11; Str, End; sometimes routs satanic enemies.  
**CLOTILDA** (Virt 22) Jun 3; Str, End, Chr, Heal.  
**COLMAN OF CLOYNE** (Virt 34) Nov 24; Chr, SpkC, SpkL, R&W.

**COLUMBA** (Virt 36) Jun 9; Str, End, Chr, wEdg, wImp, wFl, wPol; temporarily lose some Per.

**COSMAS** (Virt 15) Sep 26; Str, End, Per, Heal; learn of St. Damian.

**CRISPIN** (Virt 28) Oct 25; improves non-metal armor quality, reduces enemy non-metal armor quality.

**CYPRIAN** (Virt 54) Sep 26; Int, Alch; may stop some satanic magic.

**DAMIAN** (Virt 30) Sep 26; Str, End, learn of St. Cosmas.

**DAVID** (Virt 30) May 24; Chr, Int, Per, Weapons, Ride.

**DENIS** (Virt 38) Oct 9; Str, End, Chr, SpkC; improves Local Rep in distant lands.

**DERFEL GADARN** (Virt 57) Apr 5; Str, End, Weapons.

**DEVOTA** (Virt 26) Jan 17; Str, End, Chr; improves Local Rep in distant lands; helps to escape or withstand torture.

**DISMAS** (Virt 53) Mar 25; Agl, StrW, WdWs, Artf, Stlh (for entire party); helps in prison escapes or dealings with thieves.

**DOMINIC** (Virt 29) Aug 8; Int, SpkC, SpkL, R&W; may help in dealings with Dominicans and inquisitors.

**DOROTHY OF MONTAU** (Virt 52) Oct 30; Chr, Per, Heal; improves Local Rep in NE Germany; helps to sense evil intent; may provide a longsword to the needy.

**DROGO** (Virt 59) Apr 16; Per, Heal, WdWs; improves travel speed for a week.

**DUNSTAN** (Virt 45) May 19; Per, Weaponry, StrW, Artf, Alch; may improve metal armor quality and reduce enemy metal armor quality.

**DYMPHNA** (Virt 21) May 15; Agl, Stlh, Heal, End; sometimes routs satanic enemies.

**EDWARD THE CONFESSOR** (Virt 5) Oct 13; End, Int, Per, Weaponry, Ride; if anyone in party has virtue less than 20, their virtue is raised, but party loses wealth.

**ELIGIUS** (Virt 29) Dec 1; Artf, Alch; certain weapons increase in quality.

**EMYDIUS** (Virt 31) Aug 9; Chr, SpkC; may purify or destroy a satanic site.

**ENGELBERT** (Virt 40) Nov 7; Chr, WdWs, Ride, SpkC; allows passage over water.

**ERASMUS** (Virt 32) Jun 2; Agl, Per; improves party armor against flame or lightning; may help in dealing with sailors or seamen.

**ERIC** (Virt 42) May 18; Str, Chr, Weapons, SpkC, Ride; improves Local Rep in distant lands; may help in dealings with nobility (especially evil nobility).

**EUSTACE** (Virt 41) Sep 20; Weapons except impact and flails, WdWs, Ride; improves travel through forests for a week.

**FELIX OF NOLA** (Virt 37) Jan 14; Agl, Stlh, WdWs; may help you escape from prison once.

**FINBAR** (Virt 17) Sep 25; Per, Chr, SpkL.

**FINNIAN** (Virt 24) Sep 10; Chr, Agl, StrW, SpkC, R&W; allows passage over water.

**FLORIAN** (Virt 17) May 4; Weaponry, Ride, improves Local Rep in Austria and Poland; allows passage over water.

**FRANCIS OF ASSISI** (Virt 10) Oct 1; End, Per, Chr, SpkC, Virt; lose some wealth with every successful prayer.

**GABRIEL** (Virt 56) Sep 29; Int, Per; may cause enemies to flee battle; can sometimes see a person's mind or heart.

**GENEVIEVE** (Virt 73) Jan 3; Str, End; can prevent attacks, or sometimes prevent further fighting.

**GEORGE** (Virt 23) Apr 23; Str, Agl, Weaponry, Ride; weapons and armor quality improves.

**GERLAC** (Virt 34) Jan 5; Str, End, Chr, Weaponry, Heal.

**GERTRUDE OF NIVELLES** (Virt 26) Mar 17; SpkL, R&W, WdWs, Ride; can help you to nearest city instantly; sometimes offers insights into the future.

**GILES** (Virt 45) Sep 1; Str, End, Stlh, StrW, WdWs; temporarily lose some Agl and significant Weaponry skills; provides some money if very poor.

**GILES OF PORTUGAL** (Virt 64) May 4; Int, Per, Artf, Alch (very large); suffer -1 Virt and a 1 point wound to Str.

**GODEHARD** (Virt 39) May 4; End, SpkL, R&W; can prevent some natural disasters.

**GODFREY** (Virt 55) Nov 7; End, Artf, SpkC; may sense evil in clerics; may prevent a fight.

**GODFREY** (Virt 55) Nov 7; End, Artf, SpkC; may sense evil in clerics; may prevent a fight.

**GOTTSCHALK** (Virt 44) Jun 7; Weaponry; improves Local Rep in Wendish (NW) Germany.

**GREGORY THAUMATURGUS** (Virt 74) Nov 17; Chr, Alch, Artf, SpkC; may briefly improve all Attributes and Skills; useful in some desperate situations.

**HEDWIG** (Virt 16) Oct 16; Str, End, Heal; improves Local Rep in Silesia; may encourage nobility to reveal information.

**HENRY** (Virt 61) Jul 13; Int, Weaponry; helps in some dealings with nobility.

**HERIBERT** (Virt 30) Mar 16; Str, Chr; helps in some dealings with farmers.

**HERVE** (Virt 47) Jun 17; Per; may sense evil in people.

**HILDEGARD** (Virt 13) Sep 17; Per; improves Local Rep in W Germany; may provide dreams or visions of the future.

**HUBERT** (Virt 34) Nov 3; wPol, wThr, wBow, wMsD, Stlh, WdWs; may prevent problems with woodland animals.

**ILLTYD** (Virt 63) Nov 6; Chr, Weapons, SpkC, Ride.

**ISIDORE** (Virt 21) May 15; Chr, SpkC, StrW; improves Local Rep in distant lands; may help in dealings with peasants.

**ITA** (Virt 85) Jan 15; Str, End, Chr, Heal.

**JAMES THE GREATER** (Virt 25) July 25; Str, End, Chr, Virt; temporarily lose some Int; improves Local Rep in distant lands.

**JANUARIUS** (Virt 66) Sep 19; prevents many animals attacks; with relic could prevent many attacks.

**JOHN OF BRIDLINGTON** (Virt 36) Oct 21; Str, End (both greater for females).

**JOHN CHRYSOSTOM** (Virt 37) Sep 13; Chr, SpkC, SpkL; temporarily lose some Per; unavailable during some festivals.

**JOHN CLIMACUS** (Virt 20) Mar 30; increases all skills proportionate to the prayer's virtue.

**JOHN NEPOLMUCHEN** (Virt 22) May 16; Chr, Int, SpkC, StrW; improves Local Rep in Bohemia, especially Prag; may force a person to speak the truth.

**JOSEPH** (Virt 27) Mar 19; Artf, StrW, sometimes Chr.

**JUDE** (Virt 15) Oct 28; improves attributes and skills, but some wears off quickly; may help in "hopeless" situations.

**JULIAN THE HOSPITALER** (Virt 61) Feb 12; WdWs, Ride; aids in crossing bridges, fords or ferries.

**KESSOG** (Virt 31) Mar 10; Str, End, Chr, SpkC, Heal, Ride.

**LASDISLAUS** (Virt 51) Jun 27; Str, Agl, Weaponry, SpkC, Ride.

**LAWRENCE** (Virt 20) Aug 10; End, Chr, SpkC, StrW; helps to escape or withstand torture.

**LAZARUS** (Virt 80) Dec 17; Str, End; may reduce the possibility of death.

**LONGINUS** (Virt 49) Mar 15; Weaponry, improves weapons quality.

**LUCY** (Virt 77) Dec 13; Str, End, Per.

**LUKE** (Virt 17) Oct 18; Str, End, Heal.

**LUTGARDIS** (Virt 60) Jun 16; Chr, Per, Virt; temporarily lose some End; sometimes allows translation (levitation).

**MARGARET** (Virt 46) Jul 20; Str, End (both greater if female); some benefit to other attributes and skills for females only; gives one character superior protection from flames.

**MARGARET OF CORTONA** (Virt 52) Feb 22; Str, End, SpkC, Heal.

**MARK** (Virt 35) Oct 7; Agl, R&W.

**MARTIN OF TOURS** (Virt 69) Nov 11; Str, End, Chr, Per, SpkC, Ride; may sense evil in people.

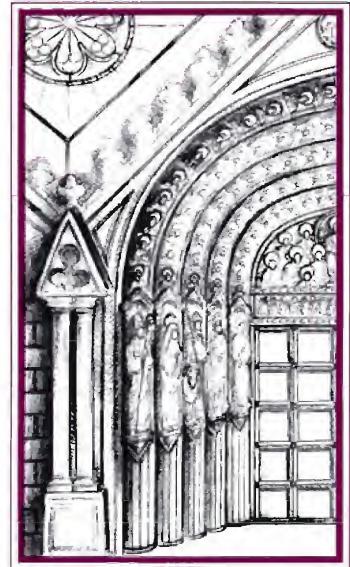
**MATTHEW** (Virt 26) Sep 21; Int, SpkL, R&W; may help with bankers.

**MAURICE** (Virt 81) Sep 22; wEdg, Alch; improves quality of edged weapons.

**MICHAEL** (Virt 72) Sep 29; Chr, Weaponry, Heal, improves Local Rep; may improve quality of weapons and armor.

**MILBURGA** (Virt 71) Feb 23; Chr, Heal; sometimes allows translation (levitation).

**MOSES THE BLACK** (Virt 66) Aug 28; Weaponry, Stlh, StrW, WdWs.



**NICHOLAS** (Virt 49) Dec 6; Agl, Chr, Ride; improves Local Rep in Lorraine, distant lands; may save ships in storms.

**NICOLAS OF TOLENTINO** (Virt 31) Sept 1; Restores all Str, some End, improves Relg and Heal.

**ODILIA** (Virt 25) Dec 13; Per, improves Local Rep in Alsace.

**ODO** (Virt 47) Jul 4; Per, Chr, Weaponry, SpkC.

**OLAF** (Virt 18) Jul 29; End, Weaponry.

**PANTALEON** (Virt 56) Jul 27; Str, End, Alch, Heal; may discourage animal attacks; improve someone's armor against flame; allows passage over water.

**PATRICK** (Virt 22) Mar 17; Str, Chr, wEdg, wImp, wPol, SpkC, SpkL, R&W; may improve armor against missiles.

**PAUL THE APOSTLE** (Virt 19) June 29; End, Chr, SpkC, SpkL, R&W; improves Local Rep in distant lands; may prevent escape from prison or hostage situations.

**PAUL THE SIMPLE** (Virt 70) Mar 1; Str, End; temporarily lose considerable Int; may permit one to see into another's mind.

**PERPETUA** (Virt 16) Mar 7; Chr; may discourage animal attacks.

**PETER** (Virt 58) Jun 29; Str, Chr, wEdg, SpkC, SpkL, Heal; temporarily lose considerable Per; may allow escape from prison.

**PETER OF ATROA** (Virt 62) Jan 1; Int, Per, Ride, Stlh, Alch; but lose a little Local Rep permanently.

**POLYCARP** (Virt 19) Feb 23; gives significant flame protection to entire party.

**RAPHAEL** (Virt 75) Sep 29; Str, End, Agl, Per, Heal; may purify or destroy satanic sites.

**RAYMOND PENAFORT** (Virt 67) Jan 7; Int, R&W; helps with church law; allows passage over water.

**RAYMOND LULL** (Virt 29) Jun 30; Int, Alch, R&W; restores some Str and End if extremely low.

**REINOLD** (Virt 27) Jan 7; End, Alch, Artf; temporarily lose some Chr; helps in climbing stone walls, finding secret doors and passages.

**ROCH** (Virt 19) Aug 16; Str, End, Artf, Heal; helps deal with plagues.

**SABAS THE GOTH** (Virt 64) Apr 12; Str, End, Chr.

**SEBASTIAN** (Virt 28) Jan 20; Str, End, Agl, Weaponry (especially wBow); Ride; helps deal with plagues.

**STANISLAUS** (Virt 42) Apr 11; Str, End, Chr, SpkC, SpkL, improves Local Rep in Poland.

**STEPHEN** (Virt 27) Aug 16; Int, Chr, Weaponry, spkC, Ride; improves Local Rep in Hungary (Pressburg).

**SWITHBERT** (Virt 25) Mar 1; Str, End, Chr, SpkC.

**TARACHUS** (Virt 50) Oct 11; Str, End, Chr; may stop animal attacks.

**THALELAEUS THE MERICFUL** (Virt 62) May 20; Str, End, Heal.

**THEODORE TIRO** (Virt 38) Nov 9; Chr, Weaponry, Ride.

**THOMAS THE APOSTLE** (Virt 24) July 1; Str, End, SpkC, Heal, Artf, Wdws.

**THOMAS AQUINAS** (Virt 68) Jan 28; Int, SpkL, R&W, Relg; may help at universities or monasteries.

**VALENTINE** (Virt 48) Feb 14; Str, End, Chr, SpkC, Stlh, Heal.

**VICTOR OF MARSEILLES** (Virt 65) Jul 21; Str, End, Chr, Weaponry, SpkC.

**VITUS** (Virt 48) Jun 15; Chr, Agl; may dispell a demon; when travelling may get you to nearest city; success could cause person praying to collapse (End=0).

**WENCESLAUS** (Virt 44) Sep 26; Str, Int, Per, Weaponry, Ride; improves Local Rep in Bohemia.

**WILFRID** (Virt 25) Oct 12; End, Chr, Artf, SpkC; improves travel speed for a week.

**WILLEHAD** (Virt 35) Nov 8; Agl, WdWs, Ride; may cause enemy to hesitate during a fight.

**WILLEBALD** (Virt 50) Jun 6; Chr, SpkC, WdWs.

**WILLIBORORD** (Virt 43) Nov 7; Chr, SpkC, WdWs; improves Local Rep in N Germany.

**WOLFGANG** (Virt 24) Oct 31; Int, Chr, SpkC, WdWs, Ride; may improve relations with villagers or nobles.

**ZITA** (Virt 23) Apr 27; End, Per, StrW; may provide information from servants.



## DARKLANDS RELICS

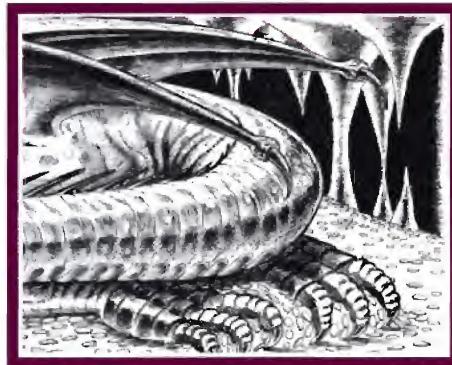
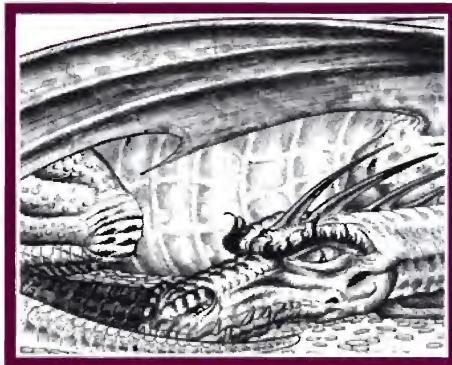
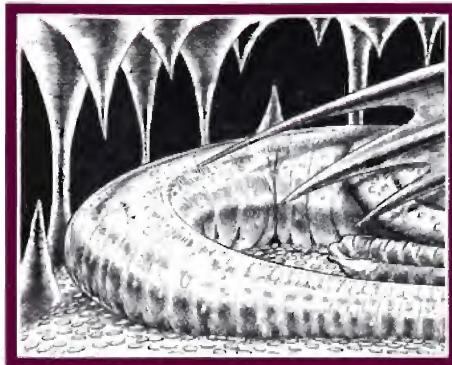
There are many holy relics in *Darklands*. The powers or abilities of relics are both uncertain and miraculous.

Generally, relics only aid the bearer, not the entire party. Some relics are weapons of miraculously high quality, which means that any hits the bearer scores will do exceptionally large amounts of damage. Some relics may aid a character in calling upon the related saint. Other relics may improve the

effects of a saint once a successful call is made. A few relics can even improve the attributes or skills of whomever carries them. In rare cases, other members of the party may be affected as well.

To learn more about a relic's effects, pass it around among the party members, call upon any related saint, and try using it as a weapon.





# Miscellany

## ABBREVIATIONS

*Darklands* uses numerous abbreviations to save space on various screens. For your convenience, they are listed here.

Agl = agility  
Alch = alchemy (skill)  
Arbst = arbalest  
Artf = artifice (skill)  
BatAxe = battle axe  
Brgdn = brigandine (armor)  
BrHG = brass handgun  
Chain = chainmail (armor)  
Chr = charisma  
CmBow = composite bow  
CrsBow = crossbow  
Curb = cuirbouilli (armor)  
DF = divine favor

End = endurance  
FkSpr = forked spear  
Flail = military flail  
FldAxe = field axe  
FScim = flaming scimitar  
Fswrd = flaming sword  
GntClub = giant club  
GrtHmr = great hammer  
GtCudg = giant cudgel  
Halbrd = halberd  
Heal = healing (skill)  
HndAxe = hand axe  
Int = intelligence  
IrHG = iron handgun  
Javeln = javelin  
L = Limbs (armor area)  
LgShld = large shield

LngBow = longbow  
LngSpr = long spear  
Lngswrd = longsword  
Lthr = leather (armor)  
MdShld = medium shield  
MilHmr = military hammer  
Per = perception  
P Stone = Philosopher's Stone  
QStaff = quarterstaff  
Relg = religious training (skill)  
Ride = riding (skill)  
R&W = read and write (skill)  
ShtBow = short bow  
ShtSpr = short spear  
Shtswrd = shortsword  
SmShld = small shield  
SpkC = speak common (skill)

SpkL = speak Latin (skill)  
Stlh = stealth (skill)  
StLthr = studded leather (armor)  
Str = strength  
StrW = streetwise (skill)  
ThrKnf = throwing knife  
V = Vitals (armor area)  
Virt = virtue (skill)  
wBow = bow weapon (skill)  
WdWs = woodwise (skill)  
wEdg = edged weapon (skill)  
wFl = flail weapon (skill)  
wImp = impact weapon (skill)  
wMsD = missile device weapon (skill)  
wPol = polearm weapon (skill)  
wThr = thrown weapon (skill)  
2Hflail = two-handed flail  
2Hswrd = two-handed sword

# LEXICON

## Place Names

Certain cities and rivers have different spellings in German and English. In most cases names with an umlaut simply lose that symbol in English (i.e., Lüneberg becomes Luneberg, etc.), or add an “e” after the vowel (i.e., “ä” becomes “ae”).

More significant changes are listed below. This includes prominent cities in modern Poland, Czechoslovakia, and Hungary that have reverted to their Slavic names.

**BRESLAU:** Wroclaw  
**BROMBERG:** Bvdgoszcz  
**BRAUNSCHWEIG:** Brunswick  
**BRÜNN:** Brno  
**DANZIG:** Gdansk  
**DONAU:** Danube River  
**KONSTANZ:** Constance  
**KÖLN:** Cologne  
**KUTTENBERG:** Kutna Hora  
**LUXEMBURG:** Luxembourg  
**MARIENBERG:** Malbork  
**MÜNCHEN:** Munich  
**NÜRNBERG:** Nuremberg  
**NYMWEGEN:** Nijmegen  
**OLMÜTZ:** Olomoue  
**POSEN:** Poznan  
**PRAG:** Prague  
**PRESSBURG:** Bratislava  
**STETTIN:** Szczecin  
**THORN:** Torun  
**WEIN:** Vienna

## Other Terms

The German language frequently uses compound words. For example, “alt” means high, and “dorf” means village, so a hamlet named “Altdorf” is literally “the high village.” The short glossary below covers common root words, and compounds where they are frequently used terms.

**BERG:** Mountain, but often a tall hill  
**BURG:** Town, city, or other urban place  
**BURGGRAF:** Castle lord, castellan  
**DIET:** Congress  
**DOM:** Cathedral  
**DORF:** Village or hamlet  
**DORFGRAF:** Village count  
**ELENDESVIERTEL:** Slum  
**ERZ-:** Arch-, as in “Erzbischof” (Archbishop) or “Erzherzog” (Archduke)  
**GELEITSBRIEFE:** Letter of safe conduct, used by merchants  
**GRAF:** Count  
**HAUS:** House or building  
**HAUPTMÄNN:** Captain or leader  
**HOLZFRAU:** Woodwife or Waldmännlein, female creature of the woods, frequently the mate of a schrat  
**KIRCHE:** Church  
**KLOSTER:** Monastery  
**LEIHHAUS:** Pawnshop  
**LOSUNGER:** Treasurer  
**MEISTER:** Master  
**MUNZENPLATZ:** Mint  
**OBEROVGT:** High steward  
**PLATZ:** Plaza, square or place  
**RAT:** Council

**RAUBRITTER:** "Robber knight," from "raub" (robber) and "ritter" (knight)

**REICHSTÄDTE:** Imperial Free City

**RICHTER:** Professional judge

**RITTER:** Armed rider, knight

**SCHLOSS:** Castle

**SCHRAT:** Wodewose or "wild man" of the woods

**SCHULTHEISS:** Baliff or judge, usually imperial

**SCHULZ:** Headman or knight-mayor

**STADT:** City

**TURM:** Fortified tower or keep

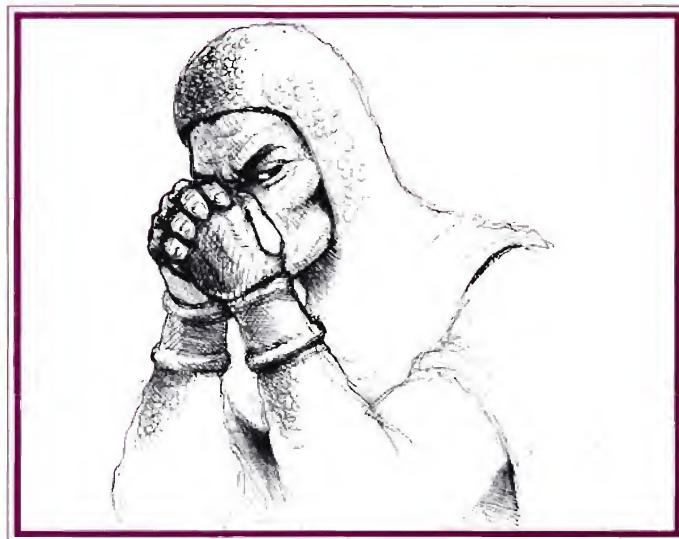
**UNIVERSITAT:** University

**VOGT:** Steward, magistrate, governor

**VON:** Sir, a knightly title (as in "Sir John")

**WURM:** worm, but frequently a lizard or scaled worm

**ZEUGHAUS:** Barracks



## DESIGNER'S NOTES

*Darklands* is an ambitious attempt to expand the "world" of computer fantasy role-playing games. At MicroProse, we have grown tired of "hack and slash" adventures, punctuated by silly puzzles blocking your acquisition of the magic gizmo that dispatches Foobash, the evil wizard. All this happens in a world populated mostly with a random assortment of monsters, sometimes expanded by a similarly random assortment of silly villagers, all of whom sprang from a bad imitation of *Lord of the Rings*.

Unlike any other game in this genre, *Darklands* is set in a real time and place. *Darklands* is fantasy because whatever people of the era *imagined* was possible, now really *is* possible. Then we took a few additional liberties for the sake of gaming and playability. However, much care was taken to make this world be the *real* 15th Century, as perceived by its inhabitants. There are many different adventures in *Darklands*. Some are interrelated, but many are completely

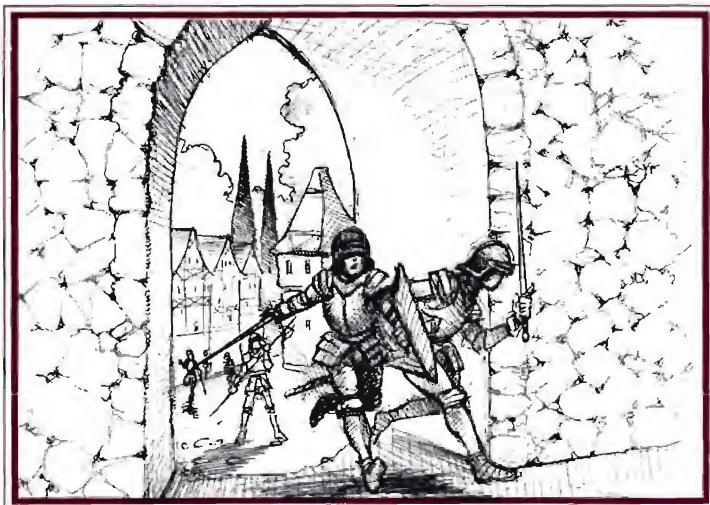
independent of each other. Lots of things are happening in the world. You can be involved in whatever interests you! This "non linear" aspect of *Darklands* means you can play it almost endlessly, or return to it from time to time, as the inclination strikes.

Since reality has so many possibilities, our biggest problem was deciding what *not* to include. Microcomputers, circa 1992, are still very limited in their abilities, as are corporate budgets. We trust you'll be understanding when you see similar city layouts, artwork, etc. There simply isn't enough manpower in the computer gaming industry to bring alive every detail. Therefore, we concentrated on the high spots. Hopefully it will inspire your imagination to fill in the rest.

**THE GAME SYSTEM:** *Darklands* uses an innovative game system for computer fantasy. Until now, fantasy games almost universally copied the concepts of "Dungeons & Dragons"®, including various "classes" of characters, who advance through various "levels" via "experience points," acquiring more "hit points" as they go. In such a system, it's quite possible for 20th Level warriors to absorb an entire mercenary company's volley of crossbow fire, simply because the character has so many hit points!

There are alternate and better systems available. They've been used for years in paper role-playing games. *Darklands* is the first to bring these concepts to computer fantasy games. In *Darklands* attributes change rarely, while skills improve regularly. This means that you, as a player, must balance the permanent importance of attributes against the desirability of higher and higher skills. Best of all, even the most skillful of adventures cannot survive target practice by a company of crossbowmen!

One controversial aspect of this system is the appearance of "virtue" as a skill. Perhaps "virtue" is a poor term to express the concept of greater mystical understanding. When characters acquire "virtue," they acquire greater holiness and a wider ability to seek miraculous aid. If this seems



improper, remember that in the medieval era the pragmatic and the spiritual were intermixed in ways alien to many modern philosophies.

Most fantasy games have a magic system. Instead, *Darklands* has religious and alchemical systems. It is important to remember that both are based on forms of belief now repudiated.

The Church portrayed in *Darklands* has no relationship to the modern Catholic Church. For the sake of game play we emphasized the miraculous. Modern Catholics should be justly proud of the Counter-Reformation (in the 1500s and 1600s) that cleansed the Church, sweeping ancient, superstitious baggage away, along with all sorts of daily evils and hypocrisy. Out of that has come a vigorous, healthy, and far more spiritual Church whose quiet role around the globe is more altruistic and beneficial than many imagine. Be assured that this game has no secret “hidden agenda” or religious message, and our apologies to anyone offended by a glimpse into one of the less attractive aspects of European religious history.

The “alchemy” of *Darklands* represents what some of the finest medieval minds hoped they *might* accomplish with their art. Alchemy is the ancestor to modern chemistry. However, without equipment to understand gases and no concept of scientific method, alchemists were doomed to an imaginary “science.” Modern chemists will see brief glimmerings of real reactive properties, but none of the “formulas” in this game produce the results described. Readers and gamers should *not* try alchemy; studying real chemistry is far more interesting and much more productive.

Perhaps the most innovative aspect of *Darklands* is the extensive use of menus. We choose this approach primarily because the traditional “guess the word” or “hear the canned speech” methods bored us. However, this has a beneficial side effect: *Darklands* is not constrained by a data base of objects and actions. As designers, we could create any situation, with any options and results, simply by creating a new menu and attached logic. The only limits are design time and imagination! Of course, as a player this means you need to

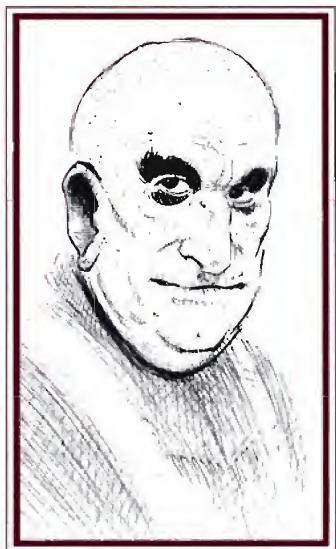
study each new situation. Even an experienced player can be surprised periodically with new situations or results. Best of all, this menu system allows the game size and scale to be quite large. You don’t have to deal with endlessly boring details, manipulate specific objects, etc. Instead, you pick a course of action and see what happens!

The battle system in *Darklands* was designed with care. We wanted the realism of real-time fighting, including animated effects, the clash of weapons, the ebb and flow of action. However, we’ve observed that it’s either frustrating or impossible for a player to control four or five characters fighting simultaneously in real time. We think “pause for orders” is a perfect compromise between realism and enjoyable gaming.

**THE PRICE OF REALISM:** Some playtesters complained about our use of monastic hours, medieval coinage and selected German spellings. We agree it’s a bit more difficult, but we think it makes the game environment “feel” realistic without ruining common readability. This is why we include umlauts (which only cause minor changes in pronunciation), but avoid the esses, a special character in the German alphabet that represents “ss” in the middle of a word.

The biggest problem is coinage, mainly because Americans have been “spoiled” by a ridiculously easy decimal system. Older Britons will undoubtedly find the relationship between pfenniges, groschen, and florins more familiar, being not unlike their old pence, schillings and pounds.

Similarly, the arms and armor available in the game are authentic. Historians may



point out that things like cuirbouilli and scale were antiquated in 15th Century Germany. However, such armor was still commonplace in Poland, Russia, and many other locales. Besides, who says that relatively poor adventurers could necessarily afford most modern equipment?

The region depicted in the game, Greater Germany, is not intended to be a justification for German expansion into neighboring countries, including Holland, France, Switzerland, Austria, Poland and Czechoslovakia. The game only shows the political conditions and borders of that era, rounded off to a conveniently square map area. The history of this region is so complicated that suggesting a "rightful" owner to almost any territory is silly. Instead, we applaud the growing European attitude that problems are best managed by people living together in harmony, democratically, without racial or cultural bias.

**WITCHCRAFT:** The portrayal of witches, witchcraft, and the Templars in *Darklands* is based entirely on 15th Century ideas, from careful reading of primary and secondary sources. There are no covens, no nature ceremonies, no pre-Christian rites or worship of Diana. The witches here come from the *Malleus Maleficarum*, the classic book about witchcraft, written in the late 1400s by two Dominican friars. The ultimate purpose of the *Darklands* witches is entirely in keeping with philosophies of that era, especially the recurring millenarian themes.

Incidentally, this portrayal is quite different from most modern conceptions. These were fostered by early 20th Century interest in pre-Christian rites and the peculiar theories of Margaret Murray. These ideas gained an unreasonably wide audience when she managed to get them into the Encyclopedia Britannica for all too many decades. Most neopagan or "modern" witches are based on Murrite theories. There is *no* connection between these modern ideas and the witches of *Darklands*.

Modern historians still debate whether witchcraft really existed as a cult in its own right, independent of the confessions extracted under torture by the Inquisition and various

witch hunters. Some argue that the Inquisition, with its methods and beliefs, created the idea of witchcraft, which was then seized upon and believed by various desperate and/or unbalanced people. Others see satanic practices as activities of real extremists, the "lunatic fringe" of various heretical cults spawned by the transparent decadence of the medieval Church. Recently, some historians have suggested that since witchcraft was predominantly female, it was a relatively harmless "device" women used to redress the balance of power in a male-dominated society. A few go on to suggest this sometimes expanded into a cult of self-delusion, caused by using various natural, mind-altering drugs available at that time.

Regarding the Templars, most historian feel they were "framed" by King Philip's need for cash and betrayed by a captive Papacy at Avignon. Indeed, subsequent medieval investigations confirmed this, but by then the legend of satanic rites was well established.

**THE CREATIVE TEAM:** *Darklands* would have been impossible without the faith and vision of the management of MicroProse software. We originally underestimated the time, complexity and cost of the project by a large factor. When development costs rose past the stratosphere, there was a great temptation to either give up or just "publish whatever we've got," regardless of quality.

The initial design work and research was done by Arnold Hendrick, veteran of many MicroProse military simulators. Eventually, the design tasks proved so huge that he dragooned first Sandy Petersen, then Doug Kaufman to help. All three are veteran designers and players of role-playing games from the 70s and 80s.

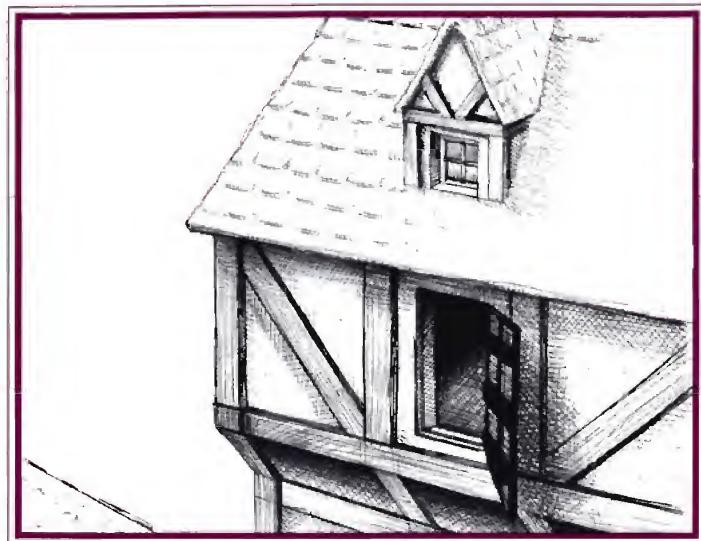
The initial programming, and ultimately the entire animated battle system was created by Jim Synoski, long-term veteran at MicroProse (among other things, he wrote the original F-19 Stealth Fighter game). He too eventually needed assistance, first from Doug Whatley (who ably took over the complexities of the menu logic system, map and world data), and finally from Bryan Stout (who provided various "black boxes" to glue together the game).

The artwork demanded by *Darklands* was a vast task. Art Director Michael Haire developed the initial concepts, including the “great illustrators” approach to background scenes that is new and extremely fitting for the subject. Implementing this fell, in an unseemly rush, onto Artino (who roughed out each scene in pen) and Chris Soares (who did much of the color rendering), assisted by Erroll Roberts and others. Meanwhile, the other huge task was the battlefield character animation, originally masterminded by Jackie Ross, then fleshed-out and refined by Rawn Martin and Patrick Downey. The introductory and concluding animations were entirely the genius of Artino, who ultimately used an in-house animation tool developed by Brian Reynolds. Overall, *Darklands* needed great art, and it certainly got it. The most constant complaint of all the artists was that they didn’t get enough time to (a) add more and (b) do an even better job!

Dr. Jeffery Briggs, MicroProse’s “composer in residence,” is the brain behind the music. However, assembling this in computer form, and doing all the sound effects, fell as usual upon the overworked MicroProse sound department, led by Ken Lagace.

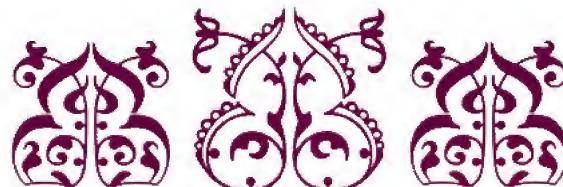
We would also like to thank Dr. Kelly DeVries for his kind academic help in various matters relating to the 15th Century, especially weaponry. We also appreciate the advice of various gaming experts who saw the projects in various stages. We apologize for sometimes ignoring their advice!

**SEQUELS:** *Darklands* was designed to permit sequels. It is possible to have some additional adventures in Germany. More importantly, it is possible to create entirely new games elsewhere in Europe. The system not only allows moving “saved game” files back and forth, but also allows you to load multiple games onto your hard disk and move back and forth



between the nations, in a sort of giant adventure. Let us know what you enjoyed in *Darklands*, what you would like to see in a sequel, and what setting you prefer. There are plenty of possibilities: the Emperor in Germany has many political problems and intrigues, England and France are busy finishing the last half of the Hundred Years War, after which England falls into civil war (the War of the Roses). Meanwhile, Italy is at the peak of its warring city-states era, Vlad the Impaler appears in the Balkans (the historical figure who ultimately became Dracula), Tamerlane is conquering Central Asia, and much more. What’s your preference?

— Arnold Hendrick, 1992



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**On Monsters and Marvels**, Ambroise Paré, J.L. Pallister trans., University of Chicago Press, 1982 (originally published in 1570s).

**The Bestiary — A Book of Beasts**, T.H. White, Capricorn Books, 1960.

**A Dictionary of Fabulous Beasts**, Richard Barber & Anne Riches, Macmillan, 1971.



### ❖ Religion, Saints & Alchemy ❖

In addition to the works below, the various multi-volume editions of *Butler's Lives*, revised as research continues, are an excellent source of information. We feel Delaney is the best single-volume work, although short on interesting anecdotes. Bokenkotter and Bossy present very sympathetic church histories, yet even they find it hard to say many positive things about the Church in this era. Those who dispute our opinion of the medieval Catholic church are urged to read them. Incidentally, both were acquired at a Catholic-sponsored bookstore.

For alchemy, in addition to various short pieces in histories of chemistry or science, we found Holmyard's book invaluable. The Book of Abramelin is very interesting, but its authenticity has been questioned. Fabricius' self-published effort is amusing, but few give it serious consideration.

**Butler's Lives of Patron Saints**, Michael Walsh ed., Harper & Row, 1987.

**Pocket Dictionary of Saints**, John J. Delaney, Image Book — Doubleday, 1980.

**The Oxford Dictionary of Saints**, Daivid Hugh Farmer, Oxford University Press, 1987.

**Saints and their Cults**, Stephen Wilson ed., Cambridge University Press, 1983.

**The Medieval Imagination**, Jacques le Goff, A. Goldhammer trans., University of Chicago Press, 1988.

**A Concise History of the Catholic Church**, Thomas Bokenkotter, Image Book — Doubleday, 1977.

**Christianity in the West, 1400-1700**, John Bossy, Oxford University Press, 1987.

**Alchemy**, E.J. Holmyard, Dover, 1990 reprint of 1957 book.

**The Book of the Sacred Magic of Abramelin the Mage**, S.L. MacGregor Mathers trans., Dover, 1975 reprint of 1900 book of manuscript reputedly written in 1458.

**Alchemy**, Johannes Fabricius, Johannes Fabricius, 1989 third revised edition.

## ❖ Magic and Witchcraft ❖

Because of the “witch craze” that peaked in Germany in the late 16th and early 17th Century, historians are still arguing what it involved, and what causes lay behind it. The *Malleus Maleficarum* is the key source, while Russell’s detailed analysis is the best modern examination of all groups and events, done with remarkable fairness to all possible viewpoints. Norman Cohn presents a popular, modern, liberal view; Montague Summers is a classic arch-conservative. Meanwhile Kieckhefer makes an interesting attempt to define “magic” in medieval terms, as separate from the witchcraft issue.

**Malleus Maleficarum**, Heinrich Kramer and James Sprenger, Montague Summers trans., Dover, 1971 reprint of 1928 translation of c.1480s publication.

**Witchcraft in the Middle Ages**, Jeffrey Burton Russell, Cornell University Press, 1972.

**Europe's Inner Demons**, Norman Cohn, Meridian Book — New American Library, 1975.

**A History of Witchcraft and Demonology**, Montague Summers, Dorset Press, 1987 reprint of 1925 edition.

**Magic in the Middle Ages**, Richard Kieckhefer, Cambridge University Press, 1989.

**Heresy and Authority in Medieval Europe**, Edward Peters ed., University of Pennsylvania Press, 1980.

**The Magician, the Witch and the Law**, Edward Peters, University of Pennsylvania Press, 1978.

**Witchcraft, Magic & Alchemy**, Grillot de Givry, J.C. Locke trans., Dover, 1971 reprint of 1931 edition.

## ❖ Art and Architecture ❖

The images in *Darklands* came from many sources, the most important being the imaginations and inner visions of the MicroProse art staff. Many of the following were used for inspiration, rather than for specific items. Furthermore, the list below is just a sampling of the resources used. Incidentally, although Fraenger’s book on Bosch has superb reproductions, his interpretive theories are rarely supported in the academic community. Similarly, while Koch’s analysis of medieval warfare is weak, but the plethora of period illustrations is a virtual gold mine.

**Medieval Cities**, Howard Saalman, George Braziller, 1968.

**Medieval Architecture**, Howard Saalman, George Braziller, 1962.

**Hieronymus Bosch**, Wilhelm Fraenger, H. Sebba trans., G.P. Putnam’s Sons, 1983.

**The Complete Woodcuts**, Albrecht Dürer, revised by Dr.M.Heffels, Artline, 1990.

**Medieval Warfare**, H.W.Koch, Prentice-Hall, 1978.

**The Book of the Medieval Knight**, Stephen Turnbull, Crown, 1985.

**Arms and Armor of the Medieval Knight**, Edge & Paddock, Crescent, 1988.

**Germany — A Photography Journey**, Rupert Matthews, Crescent, 1990.

**Devils, Monsters and Nightmares**, Howard Daniel, Abelard-Schuman, 1964.

**Konrad Gesner: Beasts & Animals**, Carol B. Grafton ed., Dover, 1983 reprint of woodcuts from 16th and 17th Centuries.



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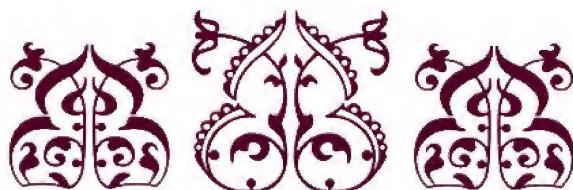
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